

SKILLS AND LEARNING INTELLIGENCE MODULE REPORT

BUILDING AN INFORMATION
RESOURCE IN THE SOUTH WEST TO
INFORM INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES,
ORGANISATIONS AND
POLICY MAKERS

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The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module Report

This report will summarise the South West's regional needs in terms of developing an intelligence resource to support the informed development of policies and action around the skills and learning agenda. This will build on information from national, regional and local sources. The Skills and Learning Module will support the accessing of information around this policy theme to individuals, businesses, organisations and policy makers

The main themes arising from the scoping study, consultations and workshops, and the practical structures to facilitate this development are set out in the report below.

1. Background to SLIM

Over the last few years the regional agenda has become increasingly important. From the inception of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in particular has been encouraging the regional collation of data. In the final report of the National Skills Task Force (NSTF) it was highlighted that the lack of understanding around labour market information and its impact on the demand and supply of skills severely hampers the responsiveness of the suppliers of education and training to the needs of consumers - both employers and individuals. The NSTF recommended that the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have an integrated and coherent labour market and learning information system to be informed by, amongst others, the regional data collected by the Regional Development Agencies, with particular focus on the skills issues directly related to economic development and regeneration. The NSTF also highlight the importance of sharing best practice at all levels to build on previous knowledge and ensure best value in implementing new activities, whether in the work place, within organisations or through public or private schemes.

The Regional Strategy developed by the South West Regional Development Agency (SW RDA or the Agency) on behalf of the South West Region identifies skills as a fundamental driver in both regeneration and economic development. Organisations at local and community levels, including Local Authorities, Learning Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce, unions, educational institutions and community initiatives have also highlighted the importance of raising skills levels to ensure that all citizens can take advantage of the opportunities available in the increasingly changing economy. It is likely that by 2010 two thirds of jobs will expect Level 3 qualifications, more than ever before. If we do not work together to raise skill levels across the board we risk continuing skills gaps across sectors, reducing productivity and competitiveness, and the high social costs associated with rising exclusion from the economy.

In order to facilitate the development of a higher-skilled economy it is important to first have an understanding of the baseline from which we are working. The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module is the initiative which will look to build on the best practice, skills and initiatives in research and data gathering currently available in the region in order to bring about this better understanding. We in the South West can then build towards a region where policies and practice are developed from a sound knowledge base.

2. The Wider Context: the Regional Observatory South West

In order to meet the rising needs in terms of integrated information and intelligence at the regional level a Regional Observatory is being developed to 'umbrella' the modules under construction. The 'modules' follow broadly public policy lines and currently include the Public Health Observatory (launched in February 2000; www.swpho.org.uk), the Environment Observatory (under consultation), the Business Economy Module (recently announced) and the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module (SLIM). In the future it is expected further 'modules' or cross cutting themes will be developed. The 'modules' will work closely together to ensure that joint working is supported from the outset.

3. The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module: a partnership initiative

From its inception the SLIM has been perceived as a partnership initiative. The SW RDA has facilitated the conceptual development as no other organisation was identified with the capacity or which spanned all sections of the skills and learning sector. The sector here includes HE and work-based training organisations, FE and post-16 organisations and statutory and non-statutory pre-16 focused education and training organisations. Equally important are the public bodies, private enterprises and businesses and the voluntary and community organisations who have an interest in or whose function is based at least partly on skills and learning development. By working together we can, for instance, enable –

- information regarding employer needs to be fed into supplier organisations
- community organisations to respond to the specific needs of their localities and build on best practice in comparative areas
- inward investors to understand the labour market and skills profile of the areas they are interested in
- enterprises large and small to respond to their own training needs to raise their competitiveness.

The role and remit of the SLIM has been defined following first the consultation process which developed the Regional Strategy and the Regional Frameworks for Action (http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/publications/framework_for_action.shtml), particularly the Skills and Learning document. In addition the specific views of the DfEE and other national bodies have been taken into account. Subsequently a project team was identified from within the Agency who developed the initial consultation papers (available from <http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/publications/slim.shtml>). Between September and November 2000 ten workshops were convened by partners in six of the seven sub-regions (Devon has had to be postponed to the next phase), and regionally by HERDA, AOC and the SW Voluntary Forum. (Contact details for the workshop leads are appended). Each of the workshops followed a similar pattern, bringing together representatives from across the sub-region or sector to discuss the needs and resources available within their particular area. The workshops highlighted the best practice currently available, the areas practitioners and policy makers would like to be better informed about and the added value they believe a regional resource could bring. The information in this report is based on the conclusions arising from the whole consultation and scoping process. This will then form the framework within which the SLIM will be developed.

4. The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module: General Approach

The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module will seek to **work in partnership** with the organisations within the skills and learning sectors, **building on the best practice** already in existence and seeking to **add value to current organisations**. By engaging widely with the Skills and Learning sectors the Module will ensure that its role is both relevant and useful to those developing and implementing policy at different levels within the region.

The primary communication mechanism will be ICT based, so as to ensure the greatest accessibility across this region. In addition it will produce some paper based publications and will support periodic conferences and networking opportunities.

The next sections of this report will summarise the role and remit of the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module as suggested by all those involved in developing this initiative. It should be recognised that although some resource has been allocated to this project development it will be a long term initiative with the first and second phase of delivery lasting at least two and a half years. Following that mainstream and alternative sources of funding will be identified and phase three of the module development initiated. The intention is to build the module at a measured pace, so as to ensure the highest quality service and the greatest flexibility in responding to the region's needs, working with the other 'modules' and partner initiatives.

5. The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module: Summary

Ideally in the medium to long term the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module will:

- Hold and/or signpost data to improve accessibility, including
 - Publicly accessible databases (local, regional, national) e.g. household survey, employer skills survey, Government databases
 - Research reports (both academic and sectoral)
- Encourage and support the availability of data searchable by geographic area (ward, TTW, sub-region) and by skill type
- Support physical networks (ie people) - sub-regional, sector and regional, with links to national initiatives
- Share best practice across skills and learning initiatives
- Identify gaps in knowledge and either undertake or commission research at regional level or support partners in doing so
- Support research practice
- Ensure basic quality assurance in terms of methodological process (this needs further discussion)
- Synthesise research findings to issue reviews for policy makers in terms of practice, funding and skills in the economy
- Have an intended audience of policy makers at all levels - in the public sector, in private enterprises and business, in voluntary and community organisations
- Inform practitioners, those teaching the courses or delivering the training (this will be further developed during phase two)

The Skills and Learning Module will be staffed and resourced in such a manner as to ensure the highest quality service and delivery. The communication mechanisms suggested include:

- Website development, including:
 - Data warehousing (interactive virtual network to share data, research reports, information) - joining up existing ones and supporting new data storage development
 - Electronic library

- Hyperlinks and signposts to relevant sites
- Bulletin boards
- Chatrooms
- Issuing newsletters outlining current regional research and the activities of partners
- Issuing its own research reports in hardcopy, using a standardised approach (under RO)
- Support local and regional meetings of practitioners and policy makers to encourage networking (building on current networks)
- Support sector specific and regional conferences around themes.

It is understood that the SLIM will be complemented by the PHO, the Environment Observatory and perhaps most significantly by the Business Economy Module. In addition the development of the SLIM role needs to be undertaken in conjunction with the Regional Observatory and the local Learning and Skills Councils. The developing needs and resources of the other significant sub regional, regional and national partnerships and organisations (SBS, EYDCPs, EBLOs, NTOs, etc.) will also be taken into account. In addition information will be shared with other regions who are also developing 'observatories' and the DfEE to ensure that there will be some national coherence.

6. The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module: Desired Outcomes

The following section details the suggestions outlined above in terms of the desired outcomes from a regional research and data resource for the skills and learning sector. Also included are the mechanisms suggested by the workshops or consultations to achieve these outcomes.

6.1 SLIM Work Programme Phase One: December 2000 - March 2001

In order to be able to best link with the organisations coming on-line in the next year it has been deemed necessary that a skeleton service and module structure be 'live' from April 2001. To this end a project team external to the RDA has been identified, to be resourced from the Skills Development Fund held by the SW RDA. This team will be working closely with the Agency and with sub-regional and regional partners to develop the phase one foundation programme. This is expected to include:

- Mapping baseline in terms of knowledge (LMI, Skills and Learning focussed data, information and research) and information sharing networks
- Developing a communication strategy including website
- Pilot SLIM reviews
- Secure funding for phase two
- Develop phase two project plan including staffing structure, resource allocation, ICT requirements
- Developing a Skills and Learning Intelligence 'module' brand and a marketing strategy, working with the other 'modules'

All products from the Phase One work programme and updates on progress will be available on the website as soon as it is available. This first phase website will be a simple 'noticeboard' of activity accessible only by direct link rather than hooked into internet search engines.

6.2 Skills and Learning Intelligence Module Phase Two : April 2001 - April 2003

A primary role for the Regional Observatory will be as a sophisticated communication mechanism, enabling easier access between partners, proactively encouraging the sharing of information and supporting the use of information to inform policy and practice across the region. As the second module to come online the SLIM will be piloting many of the mechanisms identified both for itself, for the other modules and for the RO as a whole. In this the module will be building on or learning from communication and dissemination mechanisms already in place in the South West and elsewhere.

Currently it is expected that the SLIM website and service delivery will commence from October 2001, however the exact role and the elements the service delivery will include are dependent on the successful completion of Phase One and the guarantee of (and the extent of) the funding secured. However the intention is to include as many of the needs identified through consultation as possible.

The regional role - adding value

The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module will have four core themes:

- Facilitating access to information
- Supporting local and regional research in the skills and learning field
- Converting information into intelligence at the regional level
- Encouraging the use of evidence in developing policies

A fifth element, the suggested local/sectoral role, is also explored.

6.2.1 Facilitating access to information

It is recognised that accessing information in terms of, for example, LMI, research reports, survey results and government statistics is a costly and time consuming job, especially for smaller organisations or those with little resource in terms of research and information (such as the RDA). This information is needed for many reasons including justifying activities, planning for future developments, designing learning provision, bidding for funding, marketing and evaluating performance. The currency of the data and its applicability to specific situations is also a concern, as is the methodology used in developing it, in terms of its use for comparison, replication and in the reliability of the data.

Currently several of the sub-regions have developed units to aid the sourcing and accumulation of local datasets. However it is recognised that these do not necessarily work with all sections of the community (HE, SMEs and the voluntary sectors in particular), nor do they necessarily have the capacity to signpost to resources held by national organisations or those held in other sub-regions.

The SLIM would aim to add value by developing, in the first instance, a website and 'data-warehouse' which will either hold datasets or signpost to the holders of information. The suggested types of information include:

- Regional breakdowns of national datasets (e.g. Census, ONS data, DETR index of deprivation, STA results, NOMIS)
- Regional survey results (eg SW TECS household survey)
- Local data (eg. Employer surveys, household data)

- Sector information (eg. NTO surveys, graduate results)
- Academic (HE and FE) expertise and research
- Best practice - including evaluations of interventions and activities
- Funding sources
- Funded initiatives
- Business specific information - particularly skills gaps, skills shortages and recruitment issues
- Sectoral forecasting information
- Benchmarking indicators used by partners

The SLIM personnel could be available (within reason) to assist the enquirer in refining a search for information, though this role may be more appropriately housed at the local/sectoral level. In addition it was suggested that the SLIM might support access (especially for those organisations only wishing limited use) to tools for the manipulation of information. These might include, for instance, GIS (Geographical Information Systems) or business economy software

Several issues are raised around the inclusion of such a broad list, including:

- i) Recognition that this is not an easy task, that even negotiating the access to many of the types of information mentioned will take time and that some will never be publicly available.
- ii) The knowledge capture software and technology to either hold or signpost the data, and the search engines necessary to mine it in the formats requested (broken by ward, TTW, sub-region and skill type at least) will be complex, and quite possibly prohibitively expensive.
- iii) By providing a potential 'single source' of data, and especially of the tools to manipulate that data, the module could be seen to be encouraging the uniformity of data sourcing, and so work against the 'triangulation' (multi-sourcing) of research methods.

A primary task of the project team in Phase One and Two will be to identify the types of data the SLIM can realistically hold and/or signpost and the technology needed to support this. This will then be reviewed periodically. In addition, as was suggested in the first section, the partners will periodically be requested to evaluate the content of the web site and the mechanisms used in order to ensure the data's relevance and usefulness to the skills communities.

It should be noted that although the easier access to quantitative data was a universal requirement, it was the qualitative 'why' which was seen as the more useful in terms of policy development over a period of time. This could include research reports, evaluations of interventions and anecdotal evidence that could be analysed.

6.2.2 Supporting local and regional research in the skills and learning field

If the module is to add value to the current activity rather than be simply another source of data it must have a role in supporting, where it is requested, research being undertaken. It was suggested in the workshops that this role could include:

- Encouraging holders of primary data to allow public access
- Encouraging the design of surveys so that comparison is possible (this would not mean necessarily using identical methodology)
- Signposting or supplying training in research methodology
- Advising (or signposting advice) on methods of evaluation and research to organisations who requested it (for instance community projects)

- Encouraging clarity and rigour in methodology so that research conducted in the South West is recognised to be of high quality, and so that organisations sourcing information from the SLIM can have confidence in it
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice across researchers and research projects
- Identifying gaps in the knowledge base at regional level and either commissioning (or undertaking) primary research to fill those gaps. Encourage local units to do the same.
- Supporting and encouraging communication between the current and developing LMI and research partnerships and organisations at local, sub-regional, regional, sectoral and national levels

The suggested mechanisms for achieving these roles included:

- The SLIM to have a lobbying role with regards to holders of information to facilitate access
- The SLIM could hold seminars and workshops on research methodology bringing together practitioners from across the sectors
- The newsletters and/or website bulletin board could advertise training in methodology (though it is recognised that the SLIM would have no role in assessing the quality of the courses available)
- The SLIM website could include chatrooms for researchers; bulletin boards announcing current research; 'help' pages outlining research methods used in different situations; summaries of methodology used in conducting research carried out on behalf of the SLIM or for the data and information held within the website
- The SLIM could employ an information analyst within the SLIM project management team whose role would include;
 - analysing the gaps in the information and commissioning (or undertaking) primary research to fill those gaps, or look for alternative means.
 - supporting and encouraging researchers at local/sectoral levels to fill gaps
 - Encouraging clarity in methodological process - including aiding understanding of terminology across sectors
 - Encourage survey designers to use mechanisms which would allow the synthesis of results
- The LMI and research networks would be encouraged to identify the most appropriate communication mechanism to link them to the larger networks, using web technology and potentially available funding, to support their development. The SLIM could have an advisory and supportive role, working with the SRP or appropriate bodies.

6.2.3 Converting information into intelligence at the regional level

Currently organisations across the skills and learning sector source their own information and convert it to intelligence for their own purposes, whether that be to develop the curriculum for the next year, to develop training programmes, to target marketing, to source funding or to develop strategies. However there is no organisation in the South West, including the SW RDA, with the capacity to gain a regional understanding to support these areas. Indeed part of the impetus behind developing this module has been that as the SW RDA needs intelligence on skills and LMI issues at the regional level it would seem sensible to develop a structure which will both support its own needs and its partners across the region.

In order to convert information into intelligence the Skills and Learning Intelligence model should also have a role in:

- Undertaking and/or commissioning secondary research at the regional level
- Synthesising research around themes (eg basic literacy, sector skills needed to support business development)

The SLIM would look to utilise the skills available in the South West in undertaking this research, supported by its own resources. It was suggested at several of the workshops that research studentships and graduate placements could also be offered to undertake this work. It should disseminate these research findings through the web and by publishing, both under the banner of the Regional Observatory and in appropriate journals or other media. Examples of the types of primary and secondary research which is currently felt to be missing are appended.

6.2.4 Encouraging the use of evidence in developing policies and strategies

Finally it must be central to the development of the SLIM that the consolidation of all this information is for the purpose of informing and being of use to policy makers. It is recognised that the organisations that may benefit most from the resources the SLIM could offer are often those with the least capacity to 'surf the web', read newsletters or wade through research reports; the RDA included. A significant role for the SLIM would therefore be in promoting the use of more complete intelligence in informing policy development. It could do this through:

- Identifying (through partners) the appropriate recipients of information
- Ensuring that information is targeted and appropriate with clear pathways to further information should it be required
- Facilitating or supporting locally organised seminars on appropriate themes (eg virtual learning in the workplace, customer service skills in the tourism industry)
- 'E-flash' summaries sent via email to notify partners of significant information held on the web or of events

It is likely that initially the SLIM will be focussed on policy makers at the sub-regional or regional level, for instance those from within the Agency, the Employment Service, the Local Learning and Skills Councils and the Sub-Regional Partnerships. However it has been strongly suggested that the potential audience would include those developing the strategies, policies and interventions in all public, private, businesses, voluntary and community sectors, especially those whose roles included:

- business development
- training policies
- social regeneration
- marketing education and training (or the benefits of)
- inward investment
- curriculum development
- widening participation
- professional development
- funding including
- developing strategies for the dispersal of funding
- sourcing funding

Regular evaluations of the usefulness and assessments of potential delivery development would be needed to ensure that this service continued to be appropriate.

As has been stated in section five there was a strong case put forward for the SLIM having a direct role in informing practitioners - teachers or those implementing the policies - and this potential will be explored further as part of the phase two development.

6.2.5 Local Role of SLIM

It was also strongly suggested by many of the workshops that there is a need to support a post (or part of one) within each of the sub-regions and possibly the sectors to support the local (or sectoral) information needs. This may include replicating the regional role, suggested for the SLIM, facilitating the communication between localities, the region and across the skills and economic sectors, in addition to promoting the use of research in local policy formation. They may also have a role in gatekeeping a local website or promoting the inclusion of local data on the regional site. In addition they could have an advisory and signposting role to assist in the development of research within the locality or sector.

7. Conclusion

It has been a very difficult task to synthesise the extensive information regarding this module's role and remit from the outcomes of the consultations, the suggestions from central government and in particular the ten workshops held. This report has attempted to summarise those themes that were common across all the responses, though this task was made easier by the fact that all the workshops and prior consultation were in agreement over the purpose of the SLIM to add value to current activity, to ease access to both quantitative and qualitative information (the what and the how/why) and most particularly to inform policy at all levels.

By assisting in the development of this regional resource the SW RDA is supporting the delivery of at least three of the fundamental drivers identified in the Regional Economic Strategy – Skills, Innovation and Partnership. In addition the SLIM is the mechanism by which the first headline action within the Skills and Learning Framework for Action will be delivered, namely:

- Individuals, businesses, organisations and policy makers to have comprehensive, accurate and up to date information about their local and Regional economies to inform personal choice, business development and skills and learning delivery plans.

[\[http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/publications/framework_for_action.shtml\]](http://www.southwestrda.org.uk/publications/framework_for_action.shtml)

With the added resource of the European Social Fund this initiative will be able to deliver the enhanced service required by all the skills and learning sectors.

The Skills and Learning Intelligence Module will utilise the skills, resources and the technology available in the region to build the high quality service that will aid understanding across sectors and so assist the South West in truly becoming a knowledge based region.

Appendix A: Glossary

AOC - Association of Colleges - represents the X FE colleges in the SW
BEM - Business Economy Module
Connexions - Umbrella covering careers, social services and schools careers etc to deliver personalised services to 12 - 19 year olds (2 pilots in SW, will be 6)
DfEE - Department for Education and Employment
EBLO - Education Business Links Organisations; umbrella education/business interface organisations (7 in South West)
EO - Environment Module
ES - Employment Service (National - regional)
EYDCP - Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (7 in SW)
FE - Further Education
FEDA - Further Education Development Agency - shortly to become LSCDA (national - regional)
GOSW - Government Office for the South West
HE - Higher Education
HEI - Higher Education Institutions (18 in SW including universities and colleges)
HERDA SW - Higher Education Development Agency South West
LA - Local Authorities (17 in SW)
LEAS - Local Education Authorities (17 in SW)
LLSC - Local Learning and Skills Councils (6 in South West)
LP - Learning Partnerships (10 in South West)
LSC - Learning and Skills Council
LSCDA - see FEDA
PHO - Public Health Module
RO - Regional Observatory
ROSW - Regional Observatory South West
SBS - Small Business Service - formerly Business Links (6 in South West)
SLIM - Skills and learning Intelligence Module
SRP - Sub-Regional economic Partnerships (7 in SW)
SW RDA - South West Regional Development Agency
TECs - Training and Enterprise Councils (6 in SW - shortly to merge with FEFC to become LSC)
NSTF - National Skills Task Force

Appendix B: Contacts

For further information about how you can contribute to the development of the SLIM in your area/sector please contact:

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Appendix C: Projects Suggested

The following selection of projects were suggested through the ten workshops as initiatives which would be of benefit to the community, locality or sector canvassed. Some of them have a regional element and could be products for the regional SLIM – I have highlighted a few of these. However many are specifically targeted at a local area and would be better conducted at that level, possibly with the support of the SLIM. I have included them here to give you a flavour of the breadth of the discussions and needs that were expressed.

Research Projects

- It would be beneficial to map:
 - Current best practice in data gathering
 - Web tools
 - Websites of partners/sectors
 - National datasets (inc who has regional/local breakdown)
 - Possible tools for manipulating data
 - Dissemination methods (which work? Who is doing what?)
 - Useful mechanisms for mining data
 - Information types collected by different sectors and purpose of information
 - Current networks
 - Users
 - Suppliers
 - 'Low' and 'medium' skills in terms of basic/generic/key /occupational
 - The questions asked by businesses (what do they think they need?)
 - The 'flashpoint' links between skills and economy
 - Indicators which can be used for benchmarking
 - Areas of need
 - Higher level skills
 - Sector skills
 - Union representation by sector/geographic area
- **How can regional information be made fit for local purpose?**
- What are the costs (and comparative costs) of employees in locations/sectors?
- What is the availability of personnel in locations/sectors
- **What are the skills gaps in the RDA priority sectors?**
- Develop a database of initiatives which are tackling skills gaps.
- What is the mediation mechanism between employers and education?
- What is the scope of the voluntary sector?
- How does research influence policy?
- How can micro-analysis at community level ensure client confidentiality?
- **What is the voluntary sector's impact on the employment market?**
- How does research and intelligence inform the strategy of regional bodies?
- How many vocational students move into their chosen career?
- Basic Skills – What are they? And what are the distribution patterns across the region by ward?
- How does the voluntary sector support lifelong learning?
- What are the mechanism(s) which may support socially deprived individuals taking up learning?
- How can we create an intelligent region?
- How is Somerset affected by its' central location and the surrounding Travel to Work areas?
- What do people need information for? How can information affect decisions?
- **What are the regional graduate retention rates after 1, 5, 10, 15, 20 years?**

- What are the graduate returnees rates?
- What is the economic impact of HE?
- What are the demands for higher level skills?
- What are higher level skills?
- **What is the impact of tourism by district?**
- What is the impact of manufacturing by district?
- Business survival rates
 - How long do businesses survive (by district)
 - What are the contexts and mechanisms at work?
 - What are the impacts of new business start up?
- Forecasting for the construction industry
- What are learning communities?
- **Microlevel research and analysis – what is involved?**
- What are the retention rates for work based training?
- What are the SW skills resources?
- Analysis of the issues around skills within ICT, business and multimedia
- Develop SIC/SOC codes for emerging sectors
- What is the student data for pre-18s that could inform HE?
- HE as an employer – needs/issues
- What are the most useful geographical breakdowns? Compare ward, district, TTW
- How can we raise achievements of teachers?
- **What are disadvantaged communities in the SW? What are their characteristics?**
- What are the useful statistics to collect concerning ethnic minorities in the SW?
- What aspects of qualitative background material is useful to inform local employers surveys?
- **What are the rural needs within the South West**
- What is the real currency of information?
- What are the skills gaps/recruitment issues in localities?
- Can we develop micro-intelligence for districts needing funding?
- What information informs strategy at local, regional and national level?
- Sectors/clusters/communities:
 - Analysing needs
 - Longitudinal development
 - Forecasting
 - Regional/cross regional comparisons
 - Trend analysis
 - What issues impact on the environment sector causing change?
 - Develop model for change impact
 - Enable predicting change in employment structure/wages
 - Does training pay?
 - What are the trends from local, regional recruitment of FE students versus national?
 - Comparison of FE college structures.
 - Measurement of educational attainment
 - Develop mechanism to measure!
 - What are students doing by sector?
 - Does what they study mean anything?
- **Effect of skills base on inward investment – real or imagined?**
- What are the characteristics of companies?
- How can companies be assessed in terms of their predisposition to growth?
- What are the graduate retention rates in Britain?
- What is the graduate retention rate in SW?
- **What will the skills gaps in the RDA priority sectors be in 5 years time?**
- What are the role and nature of part time mature students ?
- Explore accessing using information held on individuals - ILA accounts, training providers etc

- Need for co-ordination on detailed studies on IT sector in particular - need more up to date classifications
- Develop local - focused identification of actual skills needs at employer level
- **How can the South West encourage graduate retention?**
- What are the links between affordable housing provision to skills retention, especially in overheating areas of the economy?
- What does 'overheating economy' mean?
- What is the age profiling by sector?
- What are the micro-data statistics in rural data?
- **How can currency of data be ensured?**
- Who are the people not engaged in learning – sub-regional comparisons
- What are the global impacts of FE institutions?
- **What is the impact of inward investment from global market on FE?**
- What are organisations asking?
- What do employers want in terms of skills?
- What are the multiple impacts in single localities in terms of economy, skills, health and environment?
- What are the skills and learning needs in short, medium and long term?
- What skills are available in urban areas?
- What skills are available in rural areas?
- What does 'low' and 'medium' skills mean? – in terms of basic/generic/key /occupational
- **How can the South West best sustain collaborative working?**
- **What are the barriers to learning in the South West?**
- Identify centres of expertise/good practice in the South West.
- What are the top ten course people travel for (into or out of an area)?
- What are the biggest draws in the SW?
- What are the attrition rate of jobs in specific occupations?
- Factors influencing restructuring?
- How does the behaviour of multi-nationals affect SMEs?
- **Does the incorporation of skills requirements in supply chains ensure better training and deliver better products?**
- Develop means to track trends and their specific impact early enough at microlevel to get policy decisions, structures and resources in place at a time that supports the management of change

Appendix D: Benefits

Below are some of the suggested benefits to be accrued from being a partner in the Skills and Learning Intelligence Module initiative

- Access to information at local/regional level will aid prioritisation
- Information can inform
 - Strategy
 - Service development (evidence based policy)
 - Action (evidence based practice)
- Information (properly spun and disseminated/targeted) can inform Nat/Reg/EU agenda to support SW
- Regional Ownership of datasets/tools assists neighbourhood analysis of official statistics
- Encourages sharing of commercial/public data
- Discipline advancement
- The government may use SLIM data to evaluate your project – so best to use it to assist in devising plan in first place!
- Improve communications between regions
- Bids will be more targeted and effective
- Commonality of language aids greater understanding
- Particularly of relevance to:
 - Business Dev sector
 - Curriculum Dev managers
 - Employers
 - Academics
 - Economic dev
- Supports partnership and therefore economies of scale
- Supports liP/quality standards
- Working together on joint issues shares problems and increases numbers of solutions
- Joined up value in shared promotion/understanding of the region
- Value in co-ordinated sharing of resources - library etc. (building on existing network)
- Important to open up access to data among key partners agencies
- Could deliver a strong information base to support a quality careers advice service

Appendix E: Bibliography

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- Other Regional 'observatories' (launched and under development)
<http://www.eastmidlandsobservatory.org.uk/>
<http://www.skills-insight.org.uk/>
<http://www.englandsnorthwest.com/>
<http://www.yorkshire-forward.com/region/intro.htm>
<http://www.skills-unit.com/>
<http://www.swpho.org.uk/>
<http://www.lifelonglearning.ac.uk/>

Appendix F: Related websites

It was suggested at several workshops that a list of useful websites would be helpful. The caveat is that these are the sites which I have bookmarked over the last 18 months whilst working on this project, so cannot be considered full or even necessarily up to date. I hope they are helpful.

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| http://nces.ed.gov/index.html | NCES Home Page – National Center for Education Statistics, US Department for Education |
| http://nomisweb.ac.uk/ | NOMIS - Employment/Unemployment/ Vacancies/Earnings and Demographics. |
| http://www.adset-plus.co.uk/ | Adset Home Page - promoting the effective use of information related to career opportunities |
| http://www.askgiraffe.org.uk/index.html | gateway to geospatial information - including meta-data |
| http://www.auril.org.uk/index.htm | Association for University Research and Industry Links |
| http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu/1999/teenpar/index.htm | SEU Report - Teenage Pregnancy |
| http://www.coi.gov.uk/no_flash_menu.html | Central Office for Information |
| http://www.devon.gov.uk/lifeindevon/launch2.html | Devon socio-econ stats |
| http://www.dfee.gov.uk/datasphere/ | Datasphere - DfEE/DTI stats regional and national |
| http://www.dfee.gov.uk/news/news.cfm?prnumber=043&pryear=00 | News - DfEE comments on Educational Research |
| http://www.dfee.gov.uk/perform.htm | DfEE - Schools & Colleges Performance Tables |
| http://www.dfee.gov.uk/performance/primary_99.htm | 1999 Primary School Performance Tables - Key Stage 2 |
| http://www.dfee.gov.uk/skillnet/lmst2.htm | LMST 1998-99 - Labour Market and Skill Trends 1998/99 |
| http://www.ed.gov/prog_info/ERIC/index.html | ERIC - Educational Resources Information Centre |
| http://www.essex.ac.uk/qualidata/links/links.htm | Qualitative data hyperlinks - useful links to web based qualitative (and quantitative) research and help |
| http://www.europarl.eu.int/r/dors/oeil/en/default.htm | The Legislative Observatory - EU information |
| http://www.foresight.gov.uk/ | Foresight Knowledge Pool |
| http://www.foresight.gov.uk/servlet/Menu?id=5 | Panels, Task Forces and Associate Programmes |
| http://www.heist.co.uk/ | Heist - Marketing services for universities and colleges |
| http://www.hesa.ac.uk/ | HESA - Higher Education Statistics Agency |
| http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm | Welcome to the RDS Web Site |

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| http://www.ingenta.com/ | Ingenta.com - search through academic journals |
| http://www.irf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/n80.htm | Local labour in construction: tackling social exclusion and skill shortages |
| http://www.la-hq.org.uk/directory/prof_issues/wplearning.html | Workplace learning in the corporate sector - Libraries research on, links to other useful research |
| http://www.lifelonglearning.ac.uk/ | Marchmont Observatory - Exeter Uni observatory re Adapt projects/work based learning |
| http://www.lifelonglearning.ac.uk/ | Marchmont Observatory - National Observatory focussed on collating and disseminating good practice in work based learning, esp e-learning; also links to other research on this area. |
| http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/index.html | National Literacy Trust |
| http://www.lmu.ac.uk/lbs/pri/ | PRI Online |
| http://www.localknowledge.co.uk/ | Local Knowledge - Interactive stats database including large numbers of indicators, incorporating data from variety of sources |
| http://www.lrd.org.uk/service.html | About LRD - Private consultancy |
| http://www.mimas.ac.uk/surveys/ | MIMAS - Government and other Continuous Surveys |
| http://www.mimas.ac.uk/surveys/lfs/ | MIMAS – Labour Force Survey |
| http://www.open.gov.uk/cctagis/whatsnew.htm | open.gov.uk - what's new |
| http://www.pho.org.uk/ | National Public health |
| http://www.pho.org.uk/southwest/ | SW Pubic Health Module |
| http://www.planex.co.uk/ | About the Planning Exchange |
| http://www.scpr.ac.uk/rss/apr98syn.htm | ONS-ESRC Review of Government - Social Classifications |
| http://www.skills-unit.com/welcome/welcome_fs2.htm | London Skills Forecasting Unit - Stats and research conducted by this company (London TECS) on London |
| http://www.sociologyonline.co.uk/SubjectAreas.htm | Sociology Online - Journal |
| http://www.socresonline.org.uk/ | Sociological Research Online - Peer reviewed journal on all aspects of human intercourse |
| http://www.sosig.ac.uk/welcome.html | SOSIG - Social Science Information Gateway |
| http://www.southwestsurvey.com/ | Southwest survey - TEC sponsored, site with SW regional data |
| http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ | The Source of UK Official Statistics & Data - Welcome |