

A list of sector-relevant strategic publications at September 2011

This paper lists significant strategic reports published in the last 12 months.

Role of the sector

- 16th August 2011 – [BIS: New Challenges, New chances](#)
A consultation paper which takes the strategies published in *Skills for Sustainable Growth* and *Investing in Skills for Sustainable Growth* a stage further by making proposals designed to:
 - promote high-quality teaching and learning at all levels of the adult education system;
 - *'free colleges and other skills providers from as many bureaucratic restrictions as possible'* in order to allow them to respond more effectively to the needs of their local communities; and
 - secure a fairer balance of investment in skills between the taxpayer, individual learners and employers.
- 15th June 2011 – [John Hayes' speech: Vision for further education](#)
This speech sets out John Hayes' vision for *'delivering a new future for FE that is characterised by innovation, vocational excellence and a renewed sense of enthusiasm for and pride in skills'*.
- 14th July 2011 – [Colleges in their communities interim report](#)
An interim report from the AoC, NIACE and 157 Group commission on the role of colleges in their communities, which considers the strategic role colleges can play and the added public value they can bring in leading adult learning and serving local communities, at a time when colleges are expected to take responsibility for the shape and balance of educational offer to their locality.
- 28th June – [Higher Education White Paper: students at the heart of the system](#)
This White Paper sets out the government's policies for the reform of higher education which aim to deliver:
 - a more responsive higher education sector in which funding follows the decisions of learners and successful institutions are *'freed to thrive'*;
 - a new focus on the student experience and the quality of teaching; and

- and encourages further education colleges and other alternative providers to offer a diverse range of higher education provision.

Purpose of the sector

- 26th May 2011 – [The Further Education and Skills Sector in 2020: A Social Productivity Approach](#)

An LSIS commissioned independent report from the RSA's 2020 Public Service Hub, which provides a perspective for the further education and skills sector on possible futures, and suggests a social productivity approach as a key way to achieve this.

- 16th August 2011 – [BIS: Informal adult and community learning consultation:](#)

A review of BIS investment in informal adult and community learning to ensure it:

- supports relevant government policy objectives, such as building the Big Society; and
- engages and motivates people from disadvantaged groups to learn and progress, including to skills-focused learning and employment.

- March 2011 - [AoC report: The involvement of colleges in local enterprise partnerships](#)

This report provides an initial assessment of college engagement in the establishment and development of LEPs. It finds that:

- whilst nearly all LEPs have identified skills as a strategic priority in their bids to government, there is patchy engagement between colleges and the evolving LEPs;
- in some areas there is a misunderstanding about the nature and extent of contribution FE can make to economic growth; and
- there is insufficient recognition of existing programmes and services provided by colleges to meet the skills needs of the locality.

- 5th July 2011 – [157 Group: The role of local enterprise partnerships in tackling skills needs](#)

This report suggests that the overall governance, structures and resourcing of LEPs are crucial to the delivery of the skills agenda alongside more skills-specific aspects. It argues that resolving them appropriately makes it much more likely that LEPs will be effective in addressing skills.

- 6th June 2011 – [National Skills Forum: Future of further education](#)

This report focuses on the new policy landscape and the increased freedoms and greater institutional autonomy the government is granting to FE colleges. It concludes that further work is needed to explore the practical implications of changes for the sector, both in terms of the governance challenges that greater autonomy brings, and the tools college leaders and professionals will

need to make best use of the new freedoms and become more responsive to learners, employers and communities.

Environment and context

- January 2011 – [The New World We're In 2011 – strategic implications paper](#)

This paper summarises the key areas of opportunity and responsibility for the sector in the current economic context. It argues for the importance of the sector's role in:

- developing the skills and capabilities of the current and future workforce to deliver the challenges of the growth strategy;
- delivering the ambition of full participation in learning up to the age of 18;
- establishing a renewed focus on the wider benefits of learning for individuals and for communities;
- creating new impetus for a strategic leadership role in the economic and social development of localities; and
- continuing to support equality, fairness and social mobility.

- 11th July 2011 – [Open Public Services White Paper](#)

The Open Public Services White Paper sets out the government's aim to improve public services by putting choice and control in the hands of individuals and neighbourhoods, so that public services become more responsive to peoples' needs. It outlines five principles of open public services: choice, decentralisation, diversity, fairness, and accountability.

- 5th April 2011 – [Social mobility strategy](#)

This new strategy aims to ensure everyone has a *'fair opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of the circumstances of their birth'*. The paper confirms the coalition government's commitment to placing social mobility *'at the heart'* of its social policy. It identifies participation and success in education as key indicators of social mobility and describes a range of education policies designed to support social mobility, including raising the participation age to 18, improving access to higher education, and support for young people *'struggling to get a foothold in the labour market'*.

- 9th August 2011 – [RSA report on progression in further education](#)

This paper considers how a lack of cultural, economic and institutional capital has a detrimental effect on young people from low-income backgrounds in the FE sector, and their progression into higher education or the workplace. It explores what organisations such as the RSA can do to help disadvantaged students.

- 18th May – [BIS review of offender learning](#)

This paper sets out the government's new, flexible 'Skills Offer' for offenders to enable them to develop the skills that will make them attractive to employers so that they can *'find and keep jobs on release or whilst serving a*

community sentence’... and to ‘prevent the creation of future victims of crime, with the associated economic and social costs, by cutting... reoffending’.

- 26th January 2011 – [The Education Bill](#)

The Department for Education-led Bill is the government’s next step to implement the education reform programme set out in:

- Schools White Paper, [The Importance of Teaching](#);
- [Skills for Sustainable Growth](#); and
- elements of the [reforms to higher education funding](#).

It aims to ‘*create an education system that delivers ever higher standards for children, young people and adults*’.

- 13th December 2010 – [Decentralisation and Localism Bill](#)

The government has published the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and an [accompanying guide](#). It makes the case for ‘*a radical shift of power from the centralised state to local communities*’, and describes the devolution of power, money and knowledge to those ‘*best placed to find the best solutions to local needs*’ as ‘*the best contribution that central government can make*’.

- 16th November 2010 – [Skills for Sustainable Growth](#)

The paper is the first outline of the new government’s strategy for improving skills in England. Based on the coalition agreement principles of freedom, fairness and responsibility, it sets out a number of proposals aimed at securing the contribution of skills to growth – particularly through Apprenticeships, and to a fair society. It lays the foundations for shifting the balance of responsibility for investment in skills between individuals, employers and the state, and describes reforms intended to increase flexibility for providers to respond to local needs.

- 16th November 2010 – [Skills investment strategy](#)

This document sets out an investment strategy to support the proposals in *Skills for Sustainable Growth*, including a framework for ‘*a simplified funding system and methodology*’.

- 28th October 2010 – [Government publishes local growth White Paper](#)

This BIS White Paper announces government plans to ‘kick start’ local growth. It sets out the government’s new approach to rebalancing the economy and helping drive sustainable growth by focusing on three key themes:

- shifting the locus of growth from regions to local communities and businesses, by creating dynamic local enterprise partnerships;
- increasing confidence to invest;
- tackling barriers to growth that the market will not address itself.

- 20th October 2010 – [Spending Review](#)

The Spending Review announced that the Further Education resource budget would be reduced by 25%, or £1.1 billion from £4.3 billion to £3.2 billion by 2014-15.

- 3rd March 2011 – [Alison Wolf review of vocational 14-19 education published](#)

The review sets out three underlying organising principles for reform:

- any young person's programme of study, whether '*academic*' or '*vocational*', should provide for labour market and educational progress;
- people should be provided with accurate and useful information, so that they can make decisions accordingly; and
- the system needs to be simplified dramatically, as a precondition for giving people good and accurate information, to free up resources for teaching and learning, and to encourage innovation and efficiency.

Other key players

- 1st September 2011 – [Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework consultation](#)

This consultation seeks views on proposals to revise the inspection of further education colleges, work-based learning providers, adult and community learning provision and 'Next Step' provision. The changes proposed include:

- fewer judgements that focus more sharply on the core purpose of the provider in meeting the needs and interests of learners, employers and the community;
- reports showing more clearly whether learners are on appropriate courses and how well learners are supported to achieve their qualifications and progress on to higher education or employment; and
- inspectors spending more time observing lessons or training sessions.

- 12th October 2010 – [Lord Browne report on higher education](#)

The Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, was launched in November 2009 and was tasked with making recommendations to government on the future of fees policy and financial support for full and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students. The proposals aim to increase participation, improve quality and create a sustainable long-term future for higher education in this country.