

## **Partnership Structure (1995-2003)**

The Core Skills Development Partnership was established as a company limited by guarantee, with two member organisations - Birmingham Training and Enterprise Council and Birmingham City Council. The company had a Board composed of 4 Birmingham Training and Enterprise Council nominees and 4 City Council nominees.

The remit of the Board included: keeping an overview of the whole strategy being followed ensuring that the Partnership develops within an agreed framework by approving the broad strategic objectives and endorsing a number of key principles and ways of working approving the annual use of funds against an agreed Development Plan ensuring that there are links across to the national agenda for core skills, to Birmingham Training and Enterprise Council's, the City Council's strategic priorities, to the City Pride framework and to development priorities within the wider voluntary, community and business sectors.

Reporting to the Board was a Strategic Managers Group, composed of senior managers from the various Core Skills Development Partnership organisations.

### **Partners were represented by senior managers from the following:**

- Birmingham and Solihull Training and Enterprise Council
- Economic Development Department
- Careers Education Business Partnership
- Department of Leisure and Community Services
- Education Department
- Employment Service
- Basic Skills Agency
- Birmingham Voluntary Service Council

Ensuring that substantial outputs were achieved from funded activity, and that progress was being made within planned activity, was the responsibility of various nominated people within partner organisations. These formed a small and flexible development team who continued to work within their own organisation but with a proportion of their time dedicated to Core Skills Partnership work. The composition of this group of people changed according to the profile of activity and outputs to be developed.

Financial and output accountability was via the Board, the Partnership Manager and the Policy Division of the Local Authority as the financial Accountable Body. The two mechanisms for ensuring that money was spent properly were via Local Authority internal financial regulations and procedures (for activity within the Local Authority); and via Training and Enterprise Council contracting mechanisms (for all other activity).

The funding operated through 4 overall programmes of activity. These aimed:

- To establish a company, which will enable partners to plan together, to agree activities to be funded and to account for the progress of those activities and the use of that funding.

- To develop a more strategic approach to the development of core skills amongst partners' work with pre-school and school age people, their parents, and the broader networks of voluntary and community activity.
- To develop strategies for embedding core skills into a range of education and training provision for unemployed and employed adults.
- To carry forward the particular core skills agenda of employers

Each was approved for 7 years i.e. all funded activity was contained within these 4 programme areas. Activity within each Annual Business Plan was seen as contributing to each of these four main areas. The overall purpose was to establish and implement coherent strategies (for the development of literacy and numeracy, underpinned by IT) across partners' activities. This was done by meeting a number of strategic objectives within an annual Business Plan.

The group of senior managers was responsible for developing and implementing the agreed Business Plan, in conjunction with the Partnership Manager. Members of this group had responsibility for:

- Aligning core skills developments with their own organisation's development plans and strategies
- Furthering discussions about core skills issues within their own organisation
- Agreeing the detail of activities to be put forward for funding
- Advising the Board and carrying forward Board decisions that affect their organisation
- Communicating with other organisations within their own wider partnerships and networks
- Ensuring that changed ways of working become embedded within their own organisations.
- Advising the Board and the Partnership Manager on the details of the annual Business Plan and implementing the agreed sets of activities.

### **Partnership Structure 2003-2010**

As a result of the mid way evaluation and review processes, some changes were made to the structure of the Partnership.

The Board has been extended to include the wider range of agencies now involved in the Partnership's activities ... and is due to expand further to take in the growing work of e.g. basic skills via Health agencies.

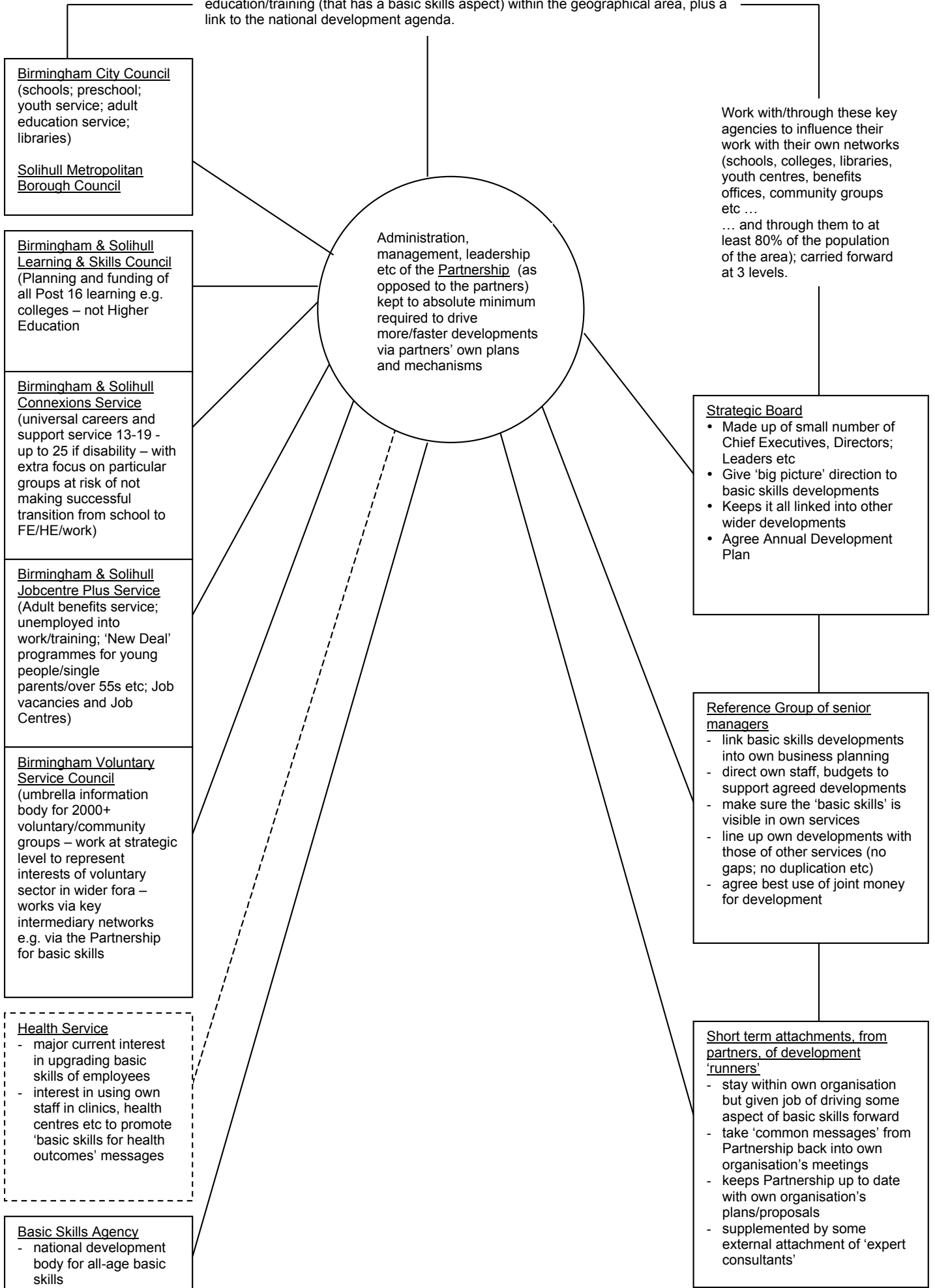
The central resource (Partnership management, administration, central research and development, co-ordination and coherence functions etc) continues to be kept as small as possible, with a total optimum operating costs budget kept less than £150,000.

The 'structural' Strategic Managers Group was replaced by a more 'functional' reference group of key contacts within the various partners who could be separately or collectively contacted re making large scale shifts in their own organisation. The cross-referencing of work through this group would be more by email than through 'diaried' meetings.

At the day to day activity level the Partnership also has a number of key action planners, 'pace setters' ... who operate across the various sectors of their own organisation to drive forward basic skills developments. Keeping the linkages across this small network of change agents is important if the big picture is to move forward as a whole, rather than fragmentarily.

This network of influences and decision-making is represented by:

Partnership includes all of the major 'structural' bodies with responsibilities for education/training (that has a basic skills aspect) within the geographical area, plus a link to the national development agenda.



Developments in language, literacy and numeracy will be ensured through the various partners' own development planning mechanisms. These will, for clarity of monitoring, be brought into one annual set of expected core skills developments – together with the additional developments planned to be taken forward by the Partnership as a whole. This remains the best elements of the annual business planning and annual reporting processes.