SUMMARY OF GOAL ONE:
A skills base that can support a world-class economy

Increasing employment rates in disadvantaged communities	> support disadvantaged communities facing particular barriers to employment, including actively marketing vacancies that are relevant to them > support older people, lone parents and sick & disabled people to engage with the labour market through a coherent partnership-based approach > co-ordinate employment and skills support in the region with other activity designed to tackle barriers to employment such as housing, childcare, care of the elderly and drug & alcohol issues > ensure that the transition from unemployment and inactivity to employment is supported by continued learning and skills development > further develop the regional business support package for companies and employers facing restructuring.
Supporting wider career choices for young people	> tackle underachievement at compulsory schooling age to reduce the number of young people, particularly from disadvantaged groups, who are not in education, employment or training > co-ordinate services for young people so that they can make better informed choices about career and learning opportunities > support education business links to provide a flexible and responsive service to schools in tailoring and extending work experience opportunities for young people > raise aspirations of all young people to continue with structured learning and skills development – at college, school or in the workplace > promote vocational and occupational programmes and pathways for progression to careers, such as the new family of apprenticeships and foundation degrees > increase the number of young people studying mathematics, science, engineering and technology subjects.
Developing skills that better meet business needs	> create a demand-led system of learning and skills provision with high success rates that is more responsive to individual, business and sectoral needs > ensure that sector skills agreements reflect regional skills needs > target government-funded level 3 training on key regional sectors, especially building on the regional network of centres of vocational excellence > develop information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for adults to foster participation in high quality learning activities, particularly for those qualified below level 2 > increase the number of people improving their literacy and numeracy skills in the workplace > increase the number of people participating in learning and gaining qualifications at levels 2 and 3, especially through vocational routes such as the new family of apprenticeships and the employer training pilot.
Developing higher level skills to support the knowledge economy	> increase participation in higher education, through targeting students from 'non-traditional' backgrounds, and building new and improved progression routes > implement a capital expansion programme to help deliver the widening participation agenda, support knowledge transfer, teaching, research and technology > develop more effective mechanisms for matching supply and demand of higher level skills within the region > support specific schemes to encourage SMEs to recruit graduates > support leadership and management development programmes that move the economy to a higher skills business model.