



Department
for Education

Central London Area Review

Final Report

February 2017

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Background

In July 2015, the government announced a rolling programme of around 40 local area reviews, to be completed by March 2017, covering all general further education and sixth-form colleges in England.

The reviews are designed to ensure that colleges are financially stable into the longer-term, that they are run efficiently, and are well-positioned to meet the present and future needs of individual students and the demands of employers. Students in colleges have high expectations about standards of teaching and learning and the extent to which their learning prepares them to progress further, to higher education or directly into employment.

The Department for Education (DfE) worked closely with the Greater London Authority (GLA), London Councils¹ and London's colleges on the London reviews. The London reviews cover a total of 46 colleges, including 12 sixth-form colleges, 3 specialist designated institutions and 1 land based provider. Due to the large number of colleges in London, the reviews were carried out through 4 sub-regional areas. The steering group meetings for each of the 4 areas were carried out in line with published guidance. Each of the 4 steering groups was chaired by a borough council leader from one of the London boroughs in the review area on behalf of all boroughs in the sub-region. The London reviews were overseen by a 'London area review steering group', a strategic body, tasked with ensuring that the 4 London reviews delivered coherent recommendations, able to secure a resilient base of institutions, and high quality post-16 skills provision, aligned to London's educational, economic and social needs.

The local steering group for Central London was chaired by the leader of the London Borough of Southwark. The steering group met on 6 occasions between March 2016 and November 2016 and additional informal meetings also took place to consider and develop options in greater detail. Membership of the steering group comprised each college's chair of governors and principal, representatives from the Greater London Authority (GLA), Central London Forward² and local authorities, 2 business representatives, the Further Education (FE) Commissioner; the Deputy FE Commissioner; the Sixth Form College Commissioner, the Regional Schools Commissioner, representatives from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Education Funding Agency (EFA), and the DfE. The London area review steering group met on 4 occasions between February and November 2016, which considered the emerging issues and outcomes from the 4 sub-regional reviews, to identify cross-cutting themes and issues, and provide advice back to inform the local process.

¹ London Councils

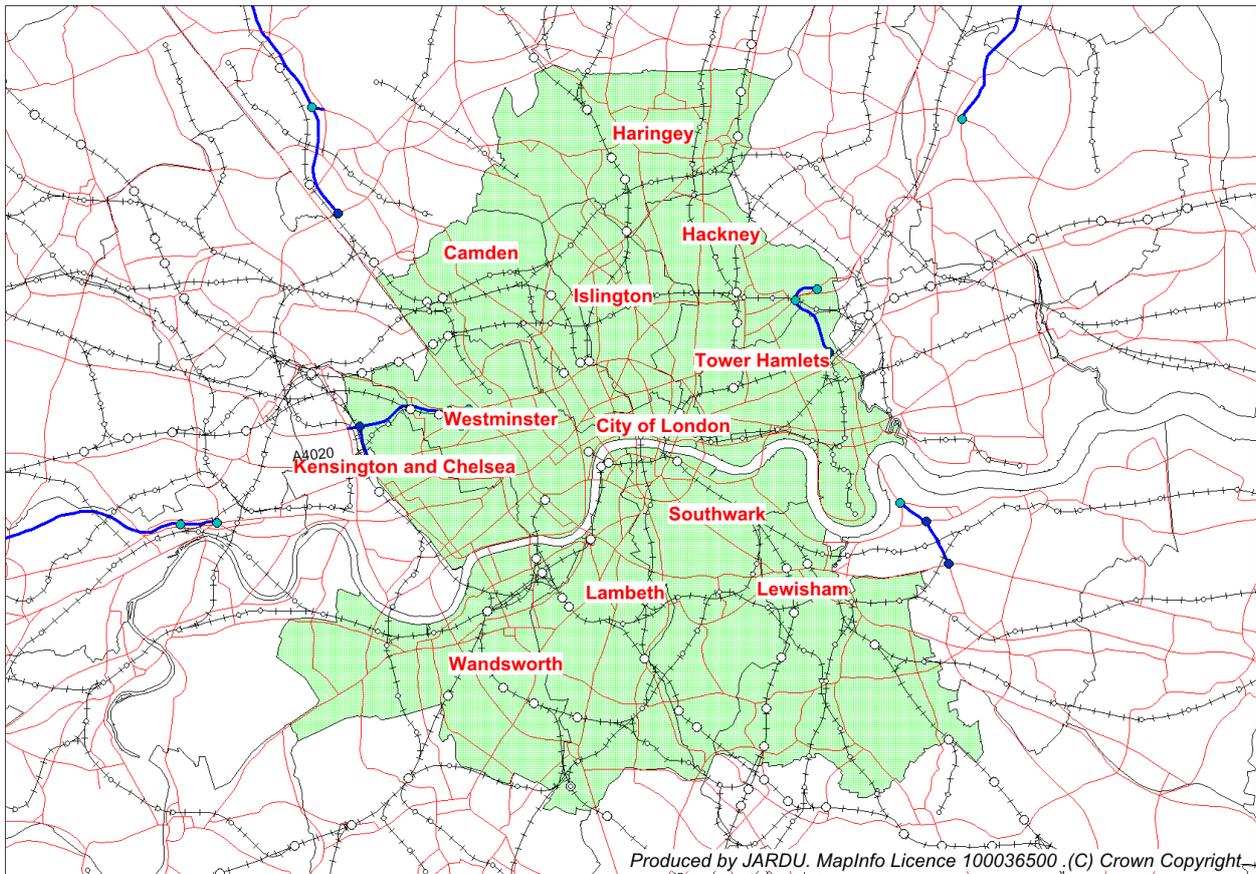
² Central London Forward

Visits to colleges and support throughout the process was provided by staff from the FE and Sixth Form College Commissioners' teams. The Joint Area Review Delivery Unit (JARDU) provided the project management, administrative support and developed supporting materials and papers used by the steering group. JARDU also led on consultations with local stakeholders.

In parallel with the London area review, London government conducted a review of Adult Community Learning (ACL). Its aim was to establish the long term strategic direction for post-19 ACL provision in London, to meet Londoners' needs, and to develop a set of recommendations for commissioning and delivery of ACL provision in London, post devolution.

The emerging findings of the ACL review informed all 4 area review steering groups, with final recommendations from the ACL review presented to the final London area review steering group.

The locations of the 12 local authority areas covered by the Central London review area are illustrated on the map below:



The table below provides a snapshot of key demographic and economic data³, which has acted as a starting point for this review.

	Camden Council	City of London Council	City of Westminster Council	Hackney Council	Haringey Council	Islington Council	Kensington and Chelsea Council	Lambeth Council	Lewisham Council	Southwark Council	Tower Hamlets Council	Wandsworth Council	London Overall	Great Britain
Total population (2015)	241,100	8,800	242,300	269,000	272,900	227,700	157,700	324,400	297,300	308,900	295,200	314,500	8,673,700	63,258,400
Population aged 16 to 64	71%	72.7%	72.3%	72.1%	70.7%	75.3%	69.2%	74.6%	70.1%	73.5%	73.9%	72.8%	68.1%	63.3%
% with higher education qualifications ⁴	61.1	N/A	63.2	49.2	49.3	62.7	65.3	65.0	53.3	56.9	45.8	66.3	49.80	37.10
Those formally qualified to level 2+	80.4%	N/A	80.1%	72.4%	74.8%	81.7%	84.0%	82.0%	78.9%	79.7%	74.9%	83.2%	76.10%	73.60%
Gross weekly pay £ of residents	751.30	1,034.40	784.7	613.3	580.7	710.5	733.9	613.8	620.8	645.4	668.9	758.9	632.4	541.0
Gross weekly pay £ by workplace	697.40	958.20	701.40	626.9	574.2	739.8	557.3	635.1	600.5	698.4	849.3	620.3	670.8	540.2
Out-of-work benefit claimants	1.6%	1.0%	1.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.1%	1.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.0%	2.2%	1.4%	1.80%	1.80%

³ ONS Local Authority Profiles – see data annex – Local socio-economic data. Please note that ONS update the data set on a regular basis and that the data included relates to the point at which the report was written.

⁴ Percentages relate to those aged 16 to 64

	Camden Council	City of London Council	City of Westminster Council	Hackney Council	Haringey Council	Islington Council	Kensington and Chelsea Council	Lambeth Council	Lewisham Council	Southwark Council	Tower Hamlets Council	Wandsworth Council	London Overall	Great Britain
% of main benefit claimants	8.5	3.4	7.6	10.7	9.7	10.5	7.2	8.8	9.8	8.8	8.5	5.9	7.7	8.7
Jobs density ⁵	2.26	84.36	4.32	0.69	0.48	1.39	1.3	0.7	0.43	1.37	1.33	0.59	0.96	0.82
Total workplace units:														
Micro ⁶	83.6%	76.4%	80.2%	88.2%	90.1%	84.5%	84.8%	90.3%	89.7%	82.7%	85.2%	89.5%	86.2%	83.6%
Small	12.7%	17.6%	16.0%	9.8%	8.2%	12.4%	12.9%	7.7%	8.2%	13.6%	11.5%	8.6%	11.0%	13.3%
Medium	3.0%	4.6%	3.2%	1.7%	1.5%	2.6%	2.0%	1.7%	1.9%	3.1%	2.6%	1.6%	2.4%	2.7%
Large	0.6%	1.4%	0.6%	0.3%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.6%	0.7%	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%

⁵ Job density relates to the level of jobs per resident aged 16-64. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64. The job density for London as a whole is 0.96, which is slightly above the national average.

⁶ Micro-businesses have a total of 1 to 9 workers; small businesses have 10 to 49 workers; medium have 50 to 249; large have 250+ (2015 data).

The key points to note are:

- London has a greater proportion of its population aged 16-64 than the national average. All of the boroughs within the Central London area have higher proportion of population aged 16-64 than London as a whole and the national average
- London has 12.7% more residents with higher education qualifications than the national average. Most of the boroughs within the review area has a significantly higher proportion of residents with higher education qualifications than London as a whole with exception of 3 boroughs (Hackney, Haringey and Tower Hamlets) that have a slightly lower percentage of the population with higher education qualifications than the London average but are still higher than the national average
- the percentage of out-of-work benefit claimants in London is comparable with the national average. Within the boroughs of the Central London area, City of London has the lowest percentage of out-of-work benefit claimants with Hackney, Haringey, Lambeth and Lewisham having the highest percentage of out-of-work benefit claimants
- the gross weekly pay, as recorded for residents and for workplaces, is higher in most of the Central London boroughs than the London and national average.

Patterns of employment and future growth⁷

The Central London review area is estimated to account for more than half of London's gross value added (GVA) and 12% of the United Kingdom. The area accounted for approximately 2.7 million employee jobs and 3.1 million workforce jobs⁸ in 2014, approximately 57% of total employment in London.

The industry sectors in the Central review area providing the highest share of total employment in London in 2014 were:

- finance and insurance
- professional, real estate, scientific and technical activities
- information and communication.

For each of these sectors, the Central review area accounted for more than 2 out of every 3 jobs in London. The prominence of the finance and insurance sector in the review area is largely attributable to the inclusion of the City of London within the review area, which is well known as a financial centre.

⁷ GLA Economics - Trends in the demand for labour and skills in London and the Central sub-region

⁸ Workforce jobs includes the total of employee jobs, self employment jobs, HM Forces and government supported trainees

The other largest industry sectors in the Central boroughs in terms of the number of jobs were:

- accommodation and food services
- administrative and support services
- health and social work.

Overall, the Central review area accounted for 67% of all jobs in London in the professional category, 70% of all London jobs in the associate professional category, 64% of the managers, directors and senior officials occupational category, and 62% of the administrative and secretarial occupations category.

Central London is forecast to have jobs growth of 700,000 to 2036, equivalent to 30,000 jobs per year, nearly 1% per annum. Highest growth is forecasted in the following sectors, ranked by increase:

- professional, real estate, scientific and technical
- administration and support
- health and care
- ICT
- accommodation and food service
- retail
- construction
- education
- arts, entertainment and recreation.

Replacement demand will also be needed across most of these sectors plus leisure, process, plant, machine and elementary operatives.

Occupational growth patterns in the Central area from 2004 to 2014 have been similar to those across London, with significant growth across: managers, directors and senior official roles; professional and associate professional occupations; caring, leisure and other services; sales and customer services; and elementary occupations.

The 2013 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) employer skills survey found that the highest densities of skills shortage vacancies were reported to be in skilled trades, and caring, leisure and other service staff. The most common skill shortages related to technical, practical or job-specific skills.

Further information on patterns of employment and future growth in the Central London sub-region and London as a whole can be found in the GLA Economics reports that were shared

with the Central London steering group: 'Trends in demand for labour and skills in London and the Central Sub-region' and 'Trends in demand for labour and skills across London as a whole'⁹.

Sub-regional priorities

Central London Forward identified the following priority areas for the review area:

- ensuring local access to basic skills training including literacy and numeracy, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) provision explicitly geared to helping learners find jobs and wider employability
- development of access routes to higher education including from A level, access courses and level 3 BTECs, to increase opportunities for graduate level employment
- deepening understanding of occupational trends, skills needs and technological developments relating to the 900,000 entry level and intermediate jobs in the review area, and their implications for the post-16 curriculum
- investment in higher learning including introducing greater inter-institutional collaboration, curriculum clusters (either geographically or sectorally) and a differentiated approach to specialisation according to institutions' capability and quality.

Feedback from LEPs, employers, local authorities, students and staff

Feedback from the LEP¹⁰, Central London Forward (sub-regional partnership) and local authority representatives, employers and other stakeholders consulted during the area review process drew attention to the need to:

- provide skilled employees for key sectors (with the highest vacancies¹¹, and the opportunity this represents for Central London's colleges and learners;
 - professional, technical and ICT
 - transport and storage
 - wholesale and retail
 - community and social
 - accommodation and food service

9 GLA Economics: Trends in demand for labour and skills in London and the Central Sub-region

10 Reference to engagement with the LEP relates to London's former Local Enterprise Partnership as the London LEP has recently been reconstituted

11 UKCES Employer Survey 2013

- address the proportion and density of skill shortage vacancies in London:
 - 30% and above of all skill shortage vacancies in London are for skilled trades; caring and personal services
 - 21% to 29% of all skill shortage vacancies in London are for associate professional; professional and technical and
 - 14% to 20% of all skill shortage vacancies in London are for managers; sales and customer services; admin clerical; elementary staff
- improve job opportunities for the Central London residents currently unemployed, as well as creating more full time opportunities for those economically inactive but wanting to work and for those in part time work who want to increase their activity
- provide support for all learners to make appropriate choices about both subject choice and learning provider
- have sufficient, quality and accessible special educational needs and disability provision with real opportunities for employment to be achieved
- a need to boost employability skills, ESOL and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), although these gaps were not obvious from the available sub-regional data.

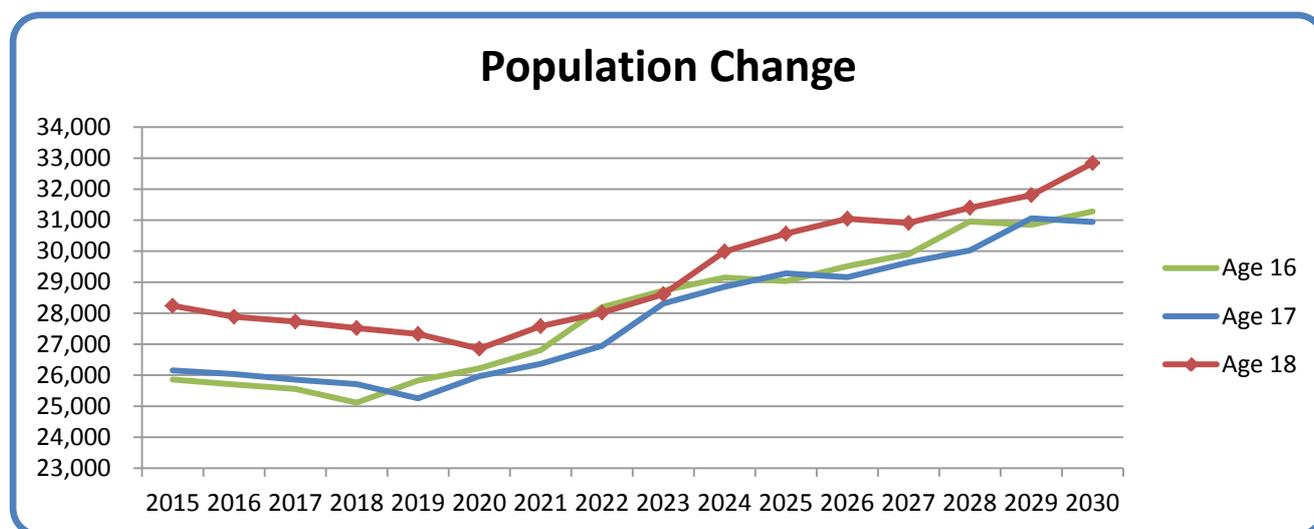
For each area review the National Union of Students submitted a report on the views of students which was considered by the steering group. Where the NUS submitted a report these are available on [NUS connect](#).

The colleges taking part in the review took primary responsibility for ensuring that their staff and union representatives had an opportunity to provide input throughout the review, which the steering group took into account. The Deputy Further Education Commissioner held meetings with staff union representatives prior to some of the steering group meetings to enable them to feed their views into the review.

The quantity and quality of current provision

The steering group considered information provided by each local authority about population projections, focusing on the changes in the number and needs of young people aged 16+.

In the Central London review area, the numbers of young people aged 16-19 is in general decline until 2018, after which the number of young people aged 16 is projected to increase. From 2019 the number of young people aged both 16 and 17 are projected to increase and from 2020, the number of young people aged 16-19 are projected to increase again. However, there may be variations within individual boroughs¹² such as Hackney, which has had a steadily increasing population of 16-19 year olds.



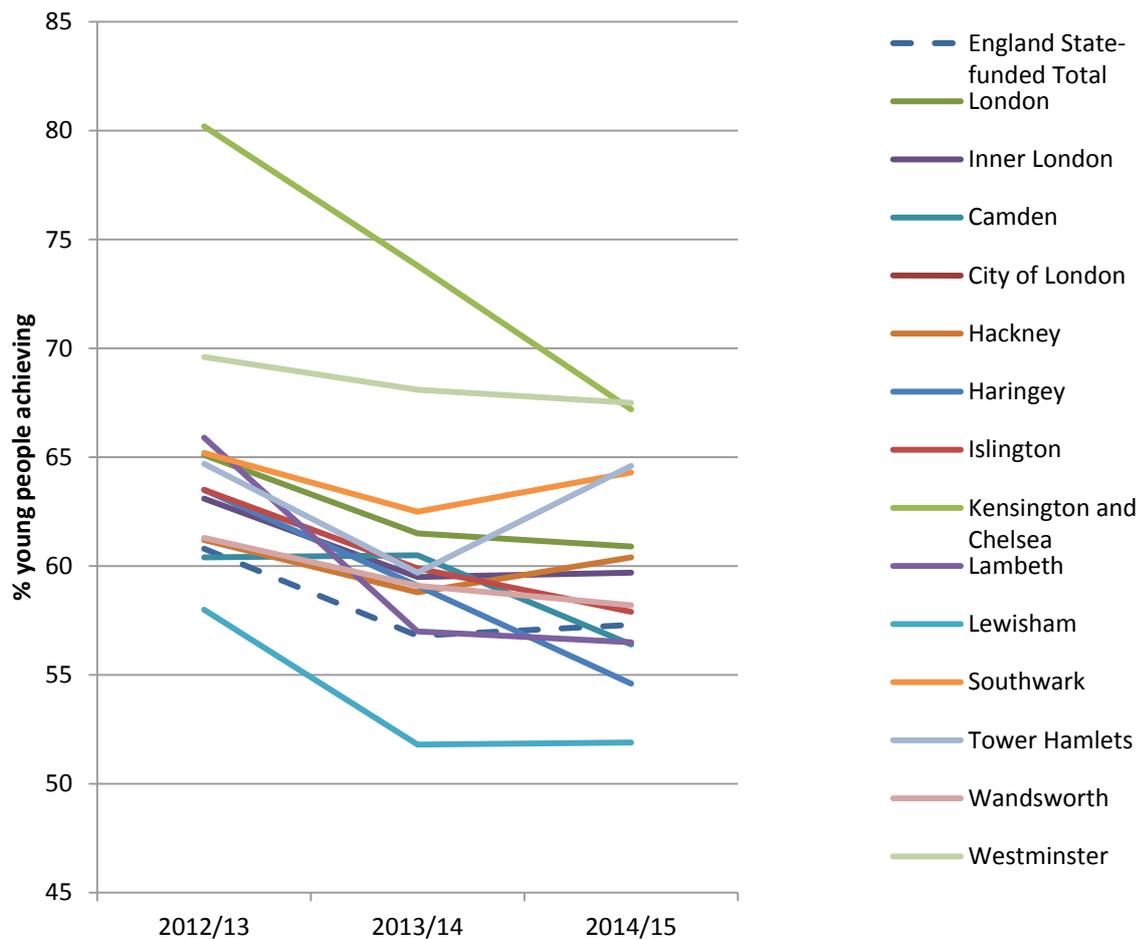
Performance of schools at Key Stage 4

The recent trend in GCSE pass rates for 16 year old school pupils completing year 11 across the Central London local authorities is illustrated overleaf¹³.

12 ONS sub-national population projections – see data annex: Population projections

13 School Key Stage 4 results – see data annex. Local authority and total (state-funded sector) figures covering achievements in state-funded schools only.

Five GCSEs A*-C including English and Maths



Performance at key stage 4 in Lewisham was significantly lower than all other boroughs in the review area for the 3 years between 2012 to 2013 to 2014 to 2015. Key stage 4 performance for most boroughs in the Central London review area has remained consistently below the average for London, although Southwark, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea were higher than the London average between 2012 to 2013 to 2014 to 2015. Results in Tower Hamlets have been higher than the London average from 2013 to 2014. From 2012 to 2013, a drop in performance was recorded for most boroughs, in line with national trend. The drop since 2012 to 2013 was most marked in Kensington and Chelsea¹⁴.

¹⁴ In 2013 to 2014, a change in how the GCSE performance of schools was defined led to a drop in the overall numbers of young people achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C including maths and English.

Schools with sixth-forms

Area reviews of post-16 education and training institutions are predominantly focused on general further education and sixth-form colleges in order to ensure there is a high quality and financially resilient set of colleges in each area of England. Schools with sixth-forms have the opportunity to seek to opt in to a review if the local steering group agrees.

The underpinning analysis for the review included current post-16 provision in the area made by schools with sixth-forms. Regional Schools Commissioners and local authorities have had the opportunity to identify any issues with school sixth-form provision, and feed these into the review. Regional Schools Commissioners take account of the analysis from area reviews in any decisions they make about future provision.

There are currently 111 funded schools with sixth-forms in the review area, including 53 local authority maintained, 52 academies, 5 free schools and a university technical college¹⁵. Most school pupils in the age range 16 to 18 are enrolled on A level courses.

Overall funded student numbers in mainstream school sixth-forms increased by 1,860 in the 3 years 2013 to 2014 to 2015 to 2016 with a total of 23,912 young people funded in a mainstream sixth-form setting in 2015 to 2016¹⁶. School sixth-forms in the area vary in size but, using as a guide, for illustration purposes only, the application threshold of 200 for new school sixth-forms in academies, there are 106 school sixth-forms (including local authority maintained and academies but excluding special schools) that were funded below that figure in 2015 to 2016. The majority of schools with sixth-forms were graded by Ofsted as good or better.

The further education and sixth-form colleges

Seventeen colleges, (4 sixth-form colleges, 10 general further education colleges and 3 specialist designated institutions) participated in this review.

- City and Islington College
- City of Westminster College
- The College of Haringey, Enfield and North-East London
- Hackney Community College
- Kensington and Chelsea College
- Lambeth College
- Lewisham Southwark College
- South Thames College

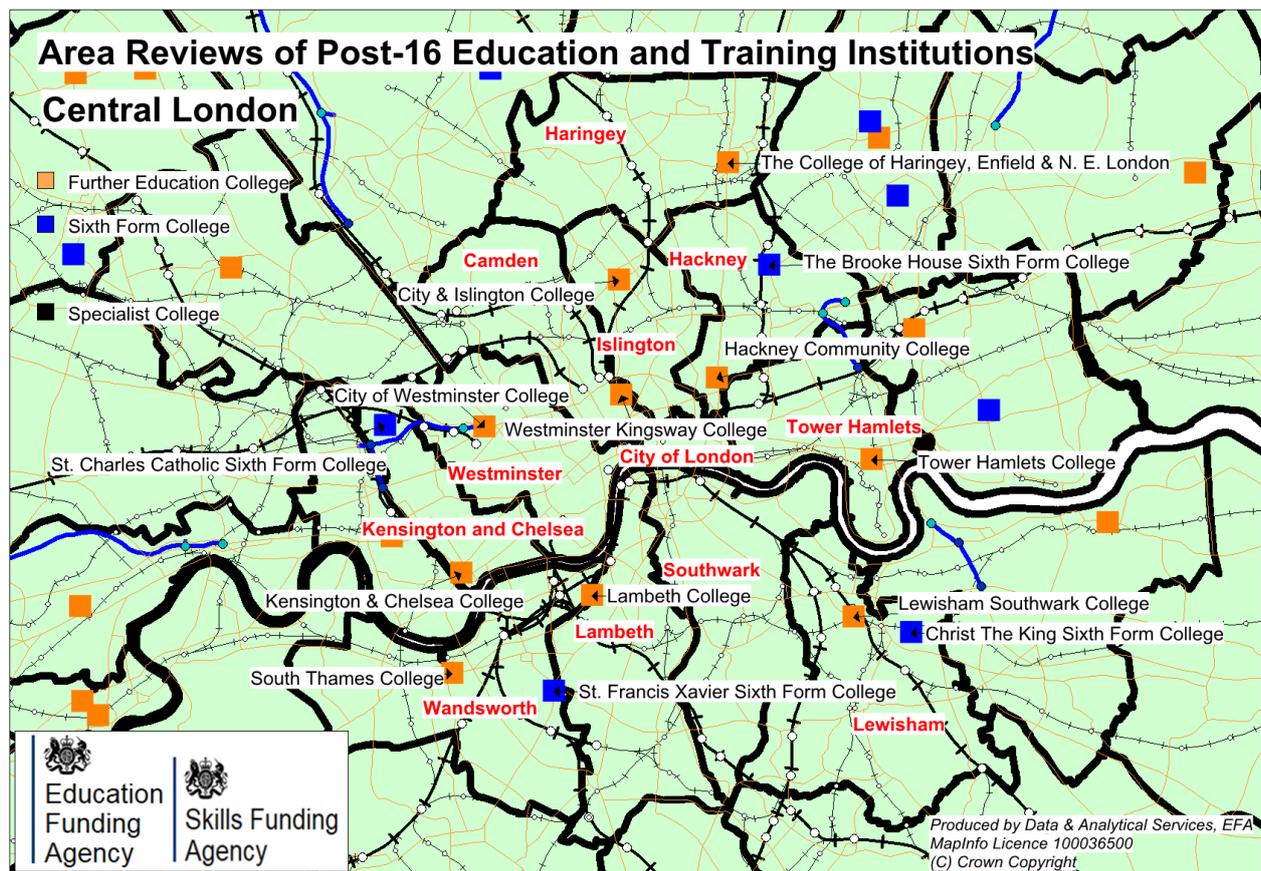
15 EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding. Where part of a local authority is in the review area, that local authority has been included in the school sixth-form data.

16 EFA allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding.

- Tower Hamlets College
- Westminster Kingsway College
- The Brooke House Sixth Form College
- Christ The King Sixth Form College
- St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College
- St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College
- Morley College (a specialist designated institution)
- The City Literary Institute (a specialist designated institution)
- The Working Men's College (a specialist designated institution)

Two mergers took place during the review, effective from 1 August 2016, between Tower Hamlets College and Hackney Community College, and between City and Islington College and Westminster Kingsway College. Proposals were shared with and endorsed by the steering group.

The location of these colleges is shown below:



Part of the area review process involved a visit to each college by specialist further education and sixth-form college advisers who report to the respective commissioners. The advisers met with governors, senior managers and staff, and reviewed a wide range of documents and data relating to each college's current range and quality of provision, their track record in attracting students, and their overall financial health. Through a data sharing

protocol between members of the steering group, the information from each of these visits was shared with colleges and informed the evidence base to the steering group for this review.

The current offer in the colleges

The colleges offer a variety of academic and technical learning, including apprenticeships, to 16-18 learners and adults.

All 10 general further education colleges offer apprenticeships. The most popular subjects are business administration, health and social care and service enterprises. There is limited apprenticeships delivery in information and communication technology, leisure, travel and tourism, agriculture, horticulture and animal care and education. There is also a very limited offer for higher apprenticeships from general further education colleges.

Eight further education colleges deliver A level provision in the Central London review area. Only Lambeth College and College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London do not offer A levels. Of the 8 colleges, City and Islington College, now part of the WKCIC Group, delivers the most A level provision. All 4 sixth-form colleges in the Central London review area offer A levels, of which Christ the King Sixth Form College delivers the most A Level provision. A range of subjects are offered by both further education colleges and sixth-form colleges for A level provision with the most popular subjects being mathematics, sociology, psychology, business studies, art and design, media studies and history.

All 10 further education colleges, 4 sixth form colleges and the 3 specialist designated institutions in the review area also deliver technical provision in the Central London review area. Of the further education colleges, City and Islington College delivers the most technical provision. St Charles Sixth Form College delivers the least technical provision from all of the colleges within scope of the area review. A wide range of technical provision is offered by the colleges, mostly at level 2 and below, with the most popular provision being functional skills, employability skills and ESOL. However, there is still a widespread offer of provision at level 3 and above including access to higher education. Each of the colleges offers some provision at level 4+.

Quality of provision and financial sustainability of colleges

The following table provides a summary of the size and quality in each of the colleges:

College	Most recent overall Ofsted grade ¹⁷	EFA allocations (2015 to 16) ¹⁸	SFA allocations (2015 to 16) ¹⁹	Total college income (2014 to 2015) 000s ²⁰
City and Islington College ²¹	Good (February 2016)	£25,648,523	£10,692,890	£45,180
City of Westminster College	Good (June 2013)	£15,181,677	£6,240,114	£27,514
The College of Haringey, Enfield and North-East London	Good (March 2014)	£11,801,548	£15,641,414	£35,080
Hackney Community College ²²	Good (September 2015)	£7,833,813	£7,594,050	£28,820
Kensington and Chelsea College	Requires improvement (June 2015)	£1,795,744	£3,958,832	£10,819
Lambeth College	Requires improvement (December 2014)	£8,912,273	£11,569,209	£33,183
Lewisham Southwark College	Requires improvement (May 2016)	£14,379,975	£13,854,703	£36,215
South Thames College	Requires improvement (May 2016)	£13,214,793	£11,158,616	£38,575
Tower Hamlets College ²³	Good (December 2013)	£10,755,386	£5,978,167	£20,162

17 Ofsted – see data annex: College inspection reports

18 EFA allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding

19 SFA allocations – see data annex: Adult funding

20 College accounts academic year 2014 to 2015 data – see data annex: College accounts. Figures in 1000s

21 The college merged with Westminster Kingsway College as of 1st August 2016 to form the new WKCIC Group. The data in this table reflects the college's position prior to the merger.

22 The college merged with Tower Hamlets College as of 1st August 2016. The data in this table reflects the college's position prior to the merger.

23 The college merged with Hackney Community College as of 1st August 2016. The data in this table reflects the college's position prior to the merger.

Westminster Kingsway College ²⁴	Good (March 2016)	£15,783,749	£11,024,041	£38,760
The Brooke House Sixth Form College	Requires improvement (April 2016)	£8,737,475	£455,803	£10,316
Christ The King Sixth Form College	Good (May 2010)	£15,751,691	£0	£16,849
St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College	Outstanding (October 2007)	£6,492,608	£50,079	£6,873
St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College	Requires improvement (January 2016)	£7,909,354	£0	£9,037
Morley College Limited	Good (April 2016)	£58,635	£5,434,192	£10,329
The City Literary Institute	Outstanding (June 2011) ²⁵	£91,295	£7,300,989	£17,839
The Working Men's College	Outstanding (March 2013)	£325,944	£4,033,972	£5,418
Capel Manor College ²⁶	Good (January 2013)	£4,595,019	£2,832,249	£11,262

Where a college was subject to a financial notice of concern or a financial notice to improve this was a factor which was taken into account in the assessment of options for structural change in the review. Lambeth College, Lewisham Southwark College and Tower Hamlets College are subject to a notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency.

Overall, the condition of college buildings is good. Some colleges have higher average space per student than others, but this does not necessarily indicate being over-spaced. Each college has unique circumstances and constraints regarding estates. The area review has highlighted some instances where rationalisation or further investment might be considered further during implementation.

24 The college merged with City and Islington College as of 1st August 2016 to form the new WKCIC Group. The data in this table reflects the college's position prior to the merger.

25 The City Literary Institute was reinspected shortly after the end of the review in December 2016 and assessed as good.

26 Figures for Capel Manor represent all activity (across all London boroughs and beyond) and are replicated in all four London area review reports.

Through the Further Education Capital Investment Fund delivered by the GLA, London's Local Enterprise Partnership is investing in 16 colleges that are involved in the London area review, 5 of which are in the Central London sub region. The London LEP will be monitoring all the projects involved in the FE Capital Investment Fund and GLA officers will be having early discussions with the colleges should there be any impact on the investment resulting from the implementation of the area review recommendations.

Higher education in further education²⁷

Progression of young people to higher education across London is the highest of all regions in England (greater than 38.1%) compared to a national progress rate of 35.4% for the United Kingdom²⁸. All of the boroughs in the Central London review area have a higher rate of progression of young people to higher education than the national average except for Hackney, which has a progression rate of 31.1% and Tower Hamlets which has a progression rate of young people to higher education of 32.2%. Six of the 12 boroughs in the Central London review area have in excess of 40% progression rate of young people progressing into higher education.

There are a wide range of partnerships and forms of collaboration between London higher education institutions (HEIs), colleges and specialist designated institutions (SDIs) (as well as between non-London HEIs and London colleges or between London HEIs and non-London colleges). These include:

- progression/articulation agreements
- joint work on widening participation
- quality assurance/validation by HEIs of HE delivery in FE colleges
- co-design of courses such as foundation degrees
- some sharing of tutors
- some continued professional development support to FE teachers
- access for colleges to higher education electronic resources
- senior HEI staff sitting on college governing bodies.

Provision for students with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and high needs²⁹

In 2015 to 2016, the EFA funded 2,155 post-16 places across the 12 local authorities in colleges, special schools and specialist post 16 institutions. Colleges delivered 997 funded places between them. The colleges delivering the highest numbers of funded places were

27 HEFCE POLAR 3 – see data annex: Higher education progression

28 Derived from HEFCE POLAR 3 – see data annex: Higher education progression

29 EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding: High needs

Lewisham Southwark College, Lambeth College, Tower Hamlets College, and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London.

During the review, local authorities expressed satisfaction that the high needs and SEND provision offered by colleges responded well to local needs.

The steering group acknowledged that structural changes taking place as a result of the review should not disadvantage post-16 students with SEND or high needs.

During the London reviews, representatives nominated by each of the 4 sub-regional steering groups came together to discuss SEND and high needs provision. Group members agreed that examples of good practice in planning, commissioning and delivery of services to SEND and high needs learners existed across London, but that there was potential to improve efficiency and quality through a wider, collegiate approach, including schools, private and community services and, ideally, health and employment services.

Apprenticeships and apprenticeship providers

In 2014 to 2015, there were 12,820 apprenticeships delivered by providers based in the Central London area review area³⁰. Overall, the most popular subject sector areas were business, administration and law (36%), health, public services and care (25%) and retail and commercial enterprise (17%).

The colleges in the Central London review area delivered between them 8,690 apprenticeships in 2014 to 2015. Of these, 58% were for intermediate level and 41% for advanced level. There was a total of 280 higher level apprenticeship apprenticeships delivered by the colleges during the same period. The largest contributors of higher level apprenticeships were Lewisham Southwark College, The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and City of Westminster College.

Forty three independent training providers were funded to deliver apprenticeships within the 12 local authority boroughs in the review area. Between them, these providers delivered 16,800 apprenticeships in 2014 to 2015.

This pattern may change in 2017, with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy³¹.

Land based provision

Landex, the sector organisation that represents a significant number of colleges which deliver land based provision, has prepared a report for steering groups on the mix and

³⁰ Numbers of apprenticeships by provider and LA – see data annex: Apprenticeships

³¹ Apprenticeship funding: how it will work

balance of land based provision across the country, the key deliverers of this and the importance of that provision to the sector and the economic development of the country.

The national strategic importance of the industry environmentally to food and water security in the future is set out. The land based industries have an ageing workforce and an increasing need for workers who can apply craft, scientific and technological skills in a land based environment. Nationally, apprenticeships in the land based sector have been slow to grow and there is a low rate of progression to level 4.

Information considered through the area review shows that the land based sector in London (which includes horticulture, landscaping, animal care, floristry, arboriculture and environmental conservation) has additional skills needs reflecting its urban focus. Although nationally apprenticeships in the land based sector have been slow to grow, in London the introduction of a Pan London Regional Apprenticeship Scheme by Capel Manor College, supported by the land based sector, has led to an increase in the number of apprentices at level 2 and 3 in 2014 to 2015 to 250³². Current recruitment trends coupled with planned initiatives and partnerships suggests that this growth will be sustained.

In London and nationally, there is a low rate of progression to level 4 and above among apprentices who go into employment in the sector after completing a level 2 or level 3 programme.

Capel Manor College

Capel Manor College continues to deliver the significant majority of London's land based provision through its 4 main delivery centres spread across all 4 review areas. The college offers a wide range of land based education and training to pre and post-19 learners, and at all levels up to and including higher level study.

London colleges and stakeholders recognise Capel Manor College as a regional specialist provider and the college data was made available to inform each steering group discussion. The college's provision was also considered by the London area review steering group as part of the review process.

³² Number of apprenticeships by provider – see data annex: Apprenticeships

The need for change

Area reviews are intended to ensure that the further education sector has a strong and sustainable future – in terms of efficiency of operation, quality of provision, and the responsiveness of courses to the needs of individuals and employers.

At the start of the reviews London government set out its aims for the London area reviews, as a whole which, were to: undertake robust analysis of future economic and demographic demand, to inform how the education and skills system in London needs to develop in scope, quality and specialisms to meet that demand; to produce a set of deliverable recommendations for general further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and other institutions that participate in the review, which set them on a path towards sustainability and increasing responsiveness to demands in London; and to begin establishing the infrastructure needed in London to commission skills under a future devolved system.

Central London Forward noted the need for the further education sector in Central London to better meet the needs of Central London's employers and a need for improved arrangements for dialogue between colleges, employers and London government so that the further education sector can be more responsive to the needs of employers in Central London and the response can be swifter and more targeted. There was also concern expressed on the quality and accessibility of careers, information, advice and guidance (IAG) and the limited delivery of apprenticeships by the colleges compared to the other providers that should be reviewed and addressed through the area review process.

The key areas for change

The key issues in relation to this review, and deliberated during steering group meetings, were:

- ensuring the colleges are financially viable for the future and to identify and commit to solutions to deliver greater financial resilience and improvement in the college estates
- identifying a solution on the viability of all colleges, responding in particular to the weaker financial position at Lambeth College and at Lewisham Southwark College, and to the quality issues identified by Ofsted at those colleges, as well as at the 3 colleges in the area rated as requiring improvement by Ofsted (Kensington and Chelsea College, South Thames College and The Brooke House Sixth Form College)
- ensuring the colleges' curriculum offer meets both the needs of their local community and London's skills priorities
- increasing the colleges' delivery of apprenticeships, ensuring strategies take account of the potential impact and opportunities from the levy, and considering opportunities for collaborative working, including apprenticeship companies

- agreeing a strategy for specialisation and minimising duplication between colleges' curriculum offer, building on current centres of technical excellence and preserving a locally accessible offer of learning up to level 2, across the review area
- sustaining and strengthening the offer of accessible SEND provision, across the review area.

Initial options raised during visits to colleges

During their visits, advisers reported that all colleges had given considerable thought to potential strategic options in advance of the review. In some cases, this meant informal discussions with neighbouring colleges and stakeholders to canvas views and to assess the potential level of support for change.

The types of options discussed were:

- formal structural change (including mergers and federations) which were considered to have the potential to improve financial viability, address quality issues and retain a good choice of subjects and options for students. Options raised included a strategic alliance, including the option to merge, between the City of Westminster College, The College of North West London and Kensington and Chelsea College
- the potential for collaboration to reduce costs and for sharing services. Lambeth College explored the potential strategic alliances with regional and national partners
- discussion between colleges about the case for specialisation. There was dialogue between the London specialist designated institutions around establishing a joint development and delivery unit/association
- the case for remaining stand-alone where colleges could demonstrate long term financial viability
- conversion to an academy. This option is available primarily but not exclusively to sixth-form colleges. By becoming an academy, a college is able to develop partnerships more easily with other schools in the area. In order to be approved, academisation proposals must be able to demonstrate how they will lead to strong links with schools, whether through joining or establishing a multi-academy trust (with other academies) or as a single academy trust collaborating with other schools in the area. Like other academies, sixth-form colleges which become academies would be eligible to receive reimbursement of their non-business VAT and would be classified as public sector bodies. The Brooke House Sixth Form College and St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College considered the possibility of academisation.

Criteria for evaluating options and use of sector benchmarks

Assessment criteria

In each area review, 4 nationally-agreed criteria are used for the process of assessment. These are:

- meets the needs of current and future students and employers
- is feasible and generates financial sustainability
- raises quality and relevance of provision, including better outcomes
- achieves appropriate specialisation

FE sector benchmarks

To support rigorous assessment of proposals, particularly options leading to major structural change, DfE have developed a series of sector 'quality and financial indicators and related criteria'.

Financial benchmarks relate to delivering operating surpluses of 3% to 5%, ensuring borrowings stay below 40% of annual income (the maximum threshold set for affordability), staff costs of no more than 65% of total income (FE sector average) and a current ratio greater than 1. Financial plans were assessed for each option, including colleges seeking to stand alone, prior to consideration by the local steering group.

A number of other indicators are also taken into account by the steering group. These relate to the impact of proposed changes on quality of provision, on teaching efficiency, and how they actively support growth in apprenticeships and work at levels 4 and 5. Within proposals, overall levels of provision for high needs students should be maintained. New strategic plans need to be supported by LEPs and local authorities. Colleges may also need to review their senior staffing and their governance to ensure that they have the required skills, and the capacity to implement rapid change.

The assessment of options indicated that, based on the information available to the area review steering group, the colleges would move towards the benchmarks and indicators through successful implementation of options, and that the protected characteristics groups, including high needs students, would retain at least equal access to learning.

More detail about these benchmarks is contained in area review guidance Annex F³³ (revised March 2016).

³³ Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions: updated guidance on area reviews Annex F, Pages 49-53

Recommendations agreed by the steering group

Nineteen recommendations were noted and endorsed by the steering group at their meeting in November 2016. These were:

- The Brooke House Sixth Form College to remain as a stand-alone sixth-form college, working to improve its financial position and its quality against an improvement plan agreed with the Department for Education's funding agencies
- Christ The King Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese
- City of Westminster College to merge with The College of North West London with a target completion date of August 2017 and with potential for a further expansion of their multi-college trust to include South Thames College and/or Lambeth College, subject to decisions taken by those colleges and the relevant steering groups
- The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London to stand-alone and to explore options for collaboration with Westminster Kingsway and City and Islington Colleges
- The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London to work with Barnet and Southgate College, as well as local stakeholders, particularly Enfield Borough Council, to ensure the offer to learners in Enfield is coherent and offers breadth, quality and progression
- Kensington and Chelsea College to merge with the City Literary Institute (forming a larger SDI)
- Lambeth College to form a partnership with London South Bank University (the college's preferred option) or to merge with either Lewisham Southwark College or join the new grouping of City of Westminster College and The College of North West London.
- Lewisham Southwark College to merge with either Lambeth College or NCG (the college's preferred option). The steering group noted the need for financial support to progress a merger between Lewisham Southwark College with Lambeth College. A decision will be taken by Lewisham Southwark's Corporation as soon as possible following the conclusion of the area review and will be informed by a meeting with a number of stakeholders and potential merger partners in November
- Morley College to remain as a stand-alone college and to explore options for collaboration with Richmond Adult Community College and Hillcroft College (all SDIs)
- South Thames College to merge with Kingston and Carshalton College or join the multi-college group being established by City of Westminster College and The College of North West London. A decision will be taken by the South Thames corporation in December 2016
- Tower Hamlets and Hackney College to merge with Redbridge College, with a target date of 1 April 2017. The steering group endorsed the merger of Tower Hamlets College and Hackney College which became effective in August 2016

- As part of the Tower Hamlets and Hackney group, Redbridge College to create a shared services and apprenticeship company with Newham College of Further Education in East London
- Westminster Kingsway College and City and Islington College to explore options for collaboration with The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London. The steering group endorsed the merger of Westminster Kingsway College and City of Islington College which became effective in August 2016
- The Working Men's College to remain stand-alone
- St Charles Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese
- St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese
- London government and providers of Adult Community Learning (ACL), including colleges, to explore recommendations arising from the London Review of ACL in the review area, including the potential development of a sub-regional community education hub
- Representatives from the Central London area review to work with colleagues from other sub-regions to support the proposed pan-London review of SEND and high needs provision
- The Central sub-region to continue work to develop a sub-regional Skills and Employment Board, to take forward the partnership working developed during the area review. Pan-London implementation arrangements to be put in place to support delivery of the outcomes of the London area reviews.

Each of these options is now outlined in more detail:

The Brooke House Sixth Form College

The Brooke House Sixth Form College to remain as a stand-alone sixth-form college, working to improve its financial position and its quality against an improvement plan agreed with the Department for Education's funding agencies.

Should the funding agencies determine that insufficient progress is being made the college will pursue options for further collaboration, up to and including a merger, to secure the viability and quality of local provision.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college currently offers courses at all levels from entry to advanced, in a wide range of technical and academic subjects. The college plans to reduce the curriculum offer in response to reductions in student numbers, with decisions on which subject areas to discontinue based on recruitment patterns and the skills needs identified by the area review. The college will also continue to offer technical courses at all levels from entry to level 3, for learners who

are unable to progress in their own school sixth forms and SEND provision will be protected. The college is developing partnership agreements with apprenticeship providers, with the aim for each curriculum area of having a progression agreement with a top quality apprenticeship provider; the first of which will be with Transport for London

- with regard to financial sustainability, the college is planning to adjust its strategy to reduce total expenditure to align with a reduced student recruitment number and income. This will be achieved through a reorganisation of curriculum, student support and business services. Further work is required by the college to demonstrate long term financial resilience and to move towards meeting the financial benchmarks
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as requires improvement by Ofsted. The college is taking the further action required to improve quality of provision through an improvement plan agreed with the funding agencies
- the college's specialisms are technical courses at all levels from entry to level 3. The college offers a broad curriculum in a wide range of subjects.

Christ The King Sixth Form College

Christ The King Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college offers an inclusive curriculum from level 1 to 3. The college is reviewing the curriculum and specialisms at each site and will continue with this work whether they pursue academy status or remain as a sixth-form college
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college's initial financial assessment indicates that the college currently achieves the majority of benchmarks but would need to improve operating performance to achieve that benchmark. Conversion to academy status could benefit the college if it can realise tax benefits and efficiencies
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed by Ofsted as good
- the college's specialisms are in arts, English, humanities, social science, BTEC provision, and its pastoral curriculum.

City of Westminster College

City of Westminster College to merge with The College of North West London with a target completion date of August 2017 and with potential for a further expansion of their multi-college trust to include South Thames College and/or Lambeth College, subject to decisions taken by those colleges and the relevant steering groups.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the combined curriculum offer from the newly merged college will significantly enhance both the provision and progression opportunities for learners, in key areas such as engineering and construction. These are strengths at both colleges and new provision will complement rather than compete to establish enhanced progression and capacity across building services, technical and civil engineering, including higher level training. Each college has new build or refurbished campuses, or plans to create them providing a wide range of high quality learning environments. The new college will be able to provide a broader and more coherent offer to employers with a single point of contact. This will provide an increased range of apprenticeship opportunities and other employer responsive provision
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment has shown that the merger would considerably improve financial resilience enabling the merged college to progress towards achieving the benchmarks
- in respect of quality of provision, both colleges are currently rated as good by Ofsted. The merged college will benefit from the strengths of each college and the sharing of good practice to drive up standards further
- the merger will enhance the colleges' specialisms and includes areas that have been identified by GLA as priorities including construction, engineering, IT, ESOL and provision for learners with high needs.

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London to stand-alone and to explore options for collaboration with Westminster Kingsway and City and Islington Colleges. The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London to work with Barnet and Southgate College, as well as local stakeholders, particularly Enfield Borough Council, to ensure the offer to learners in Enfield is coherent and offers breadth, quality and progression.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college offers courses in 13 sector subject areas, with a strong focus on applied education and technical specialisms. In line with the London economic development priorities, and building on existing strengths, the college plans to offer specialist technical education in areas such as engineering and manufacturing technology, construction and building services, digital and media communications, railway and automotive engineering, medical and dental science and accountancy and financial management
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment has indicated that the majority of benchmarks are achieved, however the college will need to take steps to address operating performance in order to move towards the published benchmark
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is rated as good by Ofsted
- the college's specialisms include construction, science, IT and engineering; business administration and accounting; apprenticeships, teacher education and trade union education. Should The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and

Westminster Kingsway and City and Islington College Group put in place collaborative arrangements, this would be expected to strengthen further the offer to a learner population across 5 boroughs, from which both colleges currently recruit, by bringing together two colleges, both rated good by Ofsted, with a strong portfolio of apprenticeships and wider learning, in priority skills areas.

Kensington and Chelsea College and The City Literary Institute

Kensington and Chelsea College to merge with the City Literary Institute.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the 2 colleges' offers are complementary, with little overlap. Within common subject areas the colleges tend to serve different markets. For example, while both offer arts courses, Kensington and Chelsea College is renowned for its fashion, design and millinery provision, while City Lit has outstanding provision in visual and performing arts. The merged college will continue to offer a diverse programme with wide appeal to attract a broad demographic, including people who can afford to pay fees and funded learners. This will enable the merged college to invest the surplus to subsidise their various community programmes and a wide array of support services, ensuring those who have less money can continue to participate in and benefit from learning
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment indicates that by 2017 to 2018 the merged college will have strengthened its operating surplus and cash reserves to move towards financial benchmarks. The merger will enable the college to capitalise on economies of scale by realising cost savings in curriculum, management and support functions, leading to enhanced financial sustainability
- in respect of quality of provision, The City Literary Institute was assessed by Ofsted as outstanding and Kensington and Chelsea College was assessed as requires improvement. The merger will drive improvement in quality in Kensington and Chelsea College, drawing on best practice in both colleges. The experience at Kensington and Chelsea College in working with awarding bodies to develop and deliver nationally recognised accredited learning, will complement City Lit's outstanding and diverse range of non-accredited programmes
- the majority of specialist provision in the merged college will be in performing and visual arts and creative writing, enabling it to play a significant part in supporting London's creative arts sector. The merged college will also provide one of the country's leading adult deaf education facilities, offering subjects including English, maths and computing, and helping to train professionals working with deaf adults and the deaf community in London. The college will retain and grow its offer of speech therapy and acquired hearing loss, which have national and international reputations as centres of excellence.

Lambeth College and Lewisham Southwark College

The steering group endorsed the recommendation for Lambeth College to either i) form a partnership with London South Bank University (the college's preferred option) ii) to merge with either Lewisham Southwark College or iii) join the new grouping of City of Westminster College and The College of North West London.

The steering group endorsed the recommendation for Lewisham Southwark College to merge with either Lambeth College or NCG (the college's preferred option), having noted the need for financial support to progress a merger between Lewisham Southwark College with Lambeth College.

A specially convened session in November 2016 allowed a panel of stakeholders comprising DfE officials, representatives of the boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, the GLA, and the governors of both colleges to offer comments to the two college corporations on proposals from:

- City of Westminster College, on Lambeth College joining the new City of Westminster/College of North West London grouping
- London South Bank University (LSBU) on a proposal to establish a partnership with Lambeth College, including joint governance arrangements
- NCG on a merger with Lewisham Southwark College
- Lewisham Southwark College and Lambeth College, on a merger of the two colleges.

Financial modelling carried out as part of the area review indicated that all merger options considered could potentially create viable colleges. Concerns were raised about the extent to which the NCG proposal could deliver an improved quality offer for learners and address wider reputational issues for Lewisham Southwark College whilst continuing to secure provision in Lewisham and Southwark for the long term. The degree of alignment to local priorities that met employer and stakeholder needs was also raised. The risk of a valuable asset and essential provision potentially transferring to a national college group headquartered outside of the London administrative boundary was also highlighted. Lewisham Southwark College set out the arguments in favour of a merger with NCG including their responses to these points.

Borough representatives emphasised their continuing and strong preference for a merger with another London provider, and from Lewisham and Southwark boroughs, their opposition to the NCG proposal. Representatives from Lewisham Southwark College and Lambeth College confirmed that they would ensure their corporation boards took full account of stakeholders' views in making their decision.

Lambeth College

Lambeth College to form a partnership with London South Bank University (the college's preferred option) or to merge with either Lewisham Southwark College, or join the new grouping of City of Westminster College and The College of North West London. The college corporation is to make a final decision by January 2017.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, Lambeth College offers a broad curriculum including mathematics and English, technical apprenticeships, employer-led training initiatives, academic and higher education programmes. Learners include 14-19 year olds and adults, those in employment and those seeking employment. The college's future offer will align to the sub-regional and London priorities, including engineering, construction, hospitality, health and social care and ESOL
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college is currently subject to a financial notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency and unlikely to meet financial benchmarks as a stand-alone college. Financial modelling carried out as part of the area review showed that with the appropriate level of financial support all merger options could create viable colleges moving towards the financial benchmarks
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed by Ofsted as requires improvement and the college is delivering an improvement plan. In their inspection, Ofsted reported that much larger number of adult learners perform significantly better than learners aged 16 to 18, especially at levels 1 and 2. Learners aged 16 to 18 perform best on level 3 courses, most of which are technical programmes. Outcomes for these learners show a 3 year trend of improvement to around the national rate for similar colleges. However, too few learners achieve high grades in their examinations and although the overall achievements of apprentices is now high compared to the previous inspection, it is not consistently so across all programme areas. The partnership with LSBU would provide Lambeth College with access to better facilities and may create opportunities through the academic staffing in the university to provide stretch and challenge to the more able learners
- the college's specialisms are accountancy; journalism; dentistry and orthodontics; modern methods of construction; high needs and SEND provision and; health and social care; early years; and hospitality and catering. The partnership with LSBU will support the establishment of more pathways and specialist gateway qualifications, focusing on level 3 and level 3/4 combinations, the ability to further develop advanced and higher apprenticeships and opportunities to expand levels 2-4 provision
- the college's corporation has committed to take account of stakeholders' views in making their decision on a merger by January 2017 and will continue to work with local stakeholders to deliver provision that meets local priorities.

Lewisham Southwark College

Lewisham Southwark College to merge with either Lambeth College or NCG (the college's preferred option)³⁴

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college will continue to offer a variety of academic and technical provision, including apprenticeships, to 16-18 learners and adults. The college plans to grow their delivery of apprenticeships for London employers and grow the range of London-based technical degree and degree apprentice programmes
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college is currently subject to a financial notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency and unlikely to meet financial benchmarks as a stand-alone college. Financial modelling carried out as part of the area review showed that with the appropriate level of financial support all merger options could create viable colleges moving towards the financial benchmarks
- in respect of quality of provision, following two consecutive inadequate ratings from Ofsted, the college was assessed as requires Improvement in its most recent inspection. A merger with NCG would support and accelerate improvements by providing access to systems and expertise already existent in the Group. NCG has a Teacher Training Centre which is a Centre of Excellence in Teacher Training that could further support improvement in the quality of provision at the college. In the case of a merger between Lambeth College and Lewisham and Southwark College, both colleges are working to improve the quality of provision and outcomes and each college has the capacity to lead in a curriculum area in which the other requires development, providing opportunities for complementary organisational development
- the college's current specialisms are ESOL for young people; construction crafts; performing arts, dance and technical theatre; business administration, accounting and finance; information technology and computing; hospitality; health and social care; and high needs provision. Being part of NCG would enable Lewisham Southwark College to accelerate their plans to grow their delivery of apprenticeships for London employers, by leveraging the expertise and resources across the group, growing the range of London-based technical degree and degree apprentice programmes using NCG's awarding powers and accessing NCG online programme expertise and infrastructure to develop London-based online learning programmes. A merger with Lambeth College would maintain the college's current specialisms and continue a technical focus as both colleges offer a curriculum, which provides employability skills and opportunities to learners of all ages with a focus to meet the needs of adults with low basic skills or an ESOL need and this is recognised by both as being a key part of meeting the needs of the communities they serve

³⁴ Lewisham Southwark College have confirmed the college corporations decision to pursue a merger with NCG in December 2016

- the college's corporation has committed to take account of stakeholders' views in making their decision on a merger and will continue to work with local stakeholders to deliver provision that meets local priorities.

Morley College

Morley College to remain as a stand-alone college, and to explore options for collaboration with Richmond Adult Community College and Hillcroft College.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, Morley College's curriculum ranges from community learning, providing first steps into education, to higher levels of learning. The college's offer is intended to give learners the confidence to re-enter education and opportunities to enhance employability skills. The college intends to grow its curriculum by establishing new unaccredited short courses and new accredited specialised provision at level 3, with plans to introduce higher education from September 2017. The college sees these changes as a response to the increasing proportion of occupations requiring highly skilled employees, while ensuring learners from disadvantaged groups have the skills they need to succeed
- with regard to financial sustainability, based on initial financial assessment, the college will continue to be viable as a stand-alone institution but will need to take steps to address operating performance in order to move towards the published benchmark
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as good by Ofsted
- the college's specialisms as a stand-alone college will continue to focus on community learning and essential skills and the visual arts and music. Morley College will continue to specialise in essential skills provision (English, maths, IT, ESOL and employability) whilst offering specialist provision in arts, culture and applied sciences, with expertise in visual arts, music and languages. Collaboration with Richmond Adult Community College and Hillcroft College is likely to see Morley College continue to specialise in essential skills provision. The collaboration could also provide opportunity to Morley College to expand its expertise in visual arts, music and languages.

South Thames College

South Thames College to merge with Kingston and Carshalton College or join the multi-college group being established by City of Westminster College and The College of North

West London. A decision will be taken by the South Thames corporation in December 2016.³⁵

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college plans to develop new apprenticeship provision with employers as well as a higher level skills offer, through developing new HE partnerships. The college is meeting current needs by ensuring its offer is aligned to high growth employment sectors for the review area and London, in particular creative industries, leisure and tourism, media and games development/digital technology, with resources and facilities and provision at levels 1 through to 5
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial modelling indicated that both merger options would improve financial resilience, with the merged college achieving the majority of benchmarks. Operating performance falls short of the benchmark, however this is expected to improve with savings and efficiencies generated by mergers
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as requires improvement overall, making the college's commitment to merge with another college that has been assessed as good or outstanding by 1st August 2017 an important outcome from the review to support improvement in the quality of provision to its learners going forward
- the college's specialisms will focus on high growth employment sectors for the review area and London, in particular creative industries, leisure and tourism, media and games development/digital technology, with provision at levels 1 through to 5, and other high performing curriculum areas. These would include: hospitality and catering; building and construction; media and communication; and service enterprises. The specialism focus for the college may be subject to change as part of any wider discussion on curriculum planning, as a result of the merger, although meeting the needs of high growth employment sectors for the review area and London is a priority and likely to remain a focal point for specialism and growth.

Tower Hamlets College, Hackney Community College and Redbridge College

Tower Hamlets and Hackney College to merge with Redbridge College, with a target date of 1 April 2017. The steering group endorsed the merger of Tower Hamlets College and Hackney College which became effective in August 2016. As part of the Tower Hamlets and Hackney group, Redbridge College to create a shared services and apprenticeship company with Newham College of Further Education in East London.

³⁵ South Thames College Corporation confirmed in December 2016 that they intend to pursue a merger with Kingston and Carshalton College

- in terms of meeting current and future needs the 3 colleges in the group will continue to serve their local markets under a borough based model. Cross group curriculum improvement will ensure that standards for all learners are raised to that of the best provision. Standards for apprentices will improve through the development of a separate, coordinated employer responsive unit across the college group
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial modelling has indicated that the merger has scope to create efficiencies and improve financial resilience. Operating performance falls short of the benchmark, however this is expected to improve as the savings and efficiencies are generated
- with respect to quality of provision, the colleges are rated good by Ofsted at their last inspections which provides a strong foundation for further improvement in the merged college
- existing specialism in business and ESOL (Tower Hamlets), construction, sport and digital (Hackney) and catering and graphics (Redbridge) will be developed through targeted investment. Emerging specialisms in healthcare and SEND will be further developed on a multi-borough level.

Westminster Kingsway College and City and Islington College

Westminster Kingsway College and City and Islington College to explore options for collaboration with The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London. The steering group endorsed the merger of Westminster Kingsway College and City of Islington College which became effective in August 2016

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the merged college offers a wide curriculum from specialist centres across Central London. Westminster Kingsway College brought to the merger outstanding provision for hospitality and 14-19 provision, including work to re-engage young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and a large college apprenticeship programme with City and Islington College offering significant programme for adult access to higher education diplomas and the largest dedicated sixth-form college in London. The college has identified 4 priorities for developing its offer: providing a comprehensive range of technical and professional routes for 16-18 year olds; providing higher technical and professional qualifications; establishing lifelong learning programmes for adults to support entry to and move between careers; and to become the provider of choice for employers outsourcing, commissioning and purchasing training
- with regard to financial sustainability, previous to the merger, both colleges were strong financially and as a merged college are forecast to continue being financially resilient achieving or approaching each financial benchmark
- in respect of quality of provision, both colleges were assessed as good by Ofsted prior to the merger. The merger will allow the college to improve the quality of its offer further through joint curriculum design, applying best practice pedagogy, creating

- shared investments in research and innovative practices (including new technologies), and investing in shared professional development and support for staff
- The college's specialisms will be consolidated, particularly around hospitality and STEM. The merged college's size and pan-London recruitment patterns will allow it to maintain a wide range of specialisms, including apprenticeships. Should the Westminster Kingsway and City and Islington College Group and The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London put in place collaborative arrangements, this would be expected to strengthen further the offer to a learner population across 5 boroughs, from which both colleges currently recruit, by bringing together 2 colleges, both rated good by Ofsted, with a strong portfolio of apprenticeships and wider learning, in priority skills areas.

The Working Men's College

The Working Men's College to remain stand-alone.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, as a stand-alone college, the primary focus for the college will continue to be on engaging the hardest to reach adults who are furthest away from employment. The majority of provision is between entry level and level 2, including a large offer of short art courses and non-accredited community learning. The college will also continue to offers specialist courses in creative, performing and visual arts, technical subjects and employment skills supported by English, maths and ESOL
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment indicates that the college currently achieves the majority of benchmarks but would need to improve operating performance to achieve that benchmark
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as outstanding by Ofsted
- the college's specialisms are preparation for life and work, and arts and media.

St Charles Catholic Sixth Form College

St Charles Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college currently offers an inclusive curriculum, from levels 1-3. Three new BTECs are being introduced for September 2016, in science, music technology (replacing an underperforming A level) and performing arts (replacing the removed AS level in performance studies). The college is exploring the possibility of growing its curriculum, in response to review area and London wide skills needs
- with regard to financial sustainability, based on initial financial assessment, the college will continue to be viable as a stand-alone institution but will need to take

steps to address operating performance in order to move towards the published benchmark

- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as outstanding by Ofsted
- the college offers a high quality and comprehensive education in a Catholic setting, with its general religious education and BTEC level 3 courses rated as outstanding.

St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College

St Francis Xavier Sixth Form College to stand-alone and pursue academisation, subject to a decision by the Diocese.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college will build on its apprenticeships offer, working in partnership with John Ruskin Sixth Form College in the South London sub-region. The college continues to meet the needs of its stakeholders, local authorities and a diverse student body and keep its extensive offer covering foundation programmes and SEND provision
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college will need to deliver on its forecast future improvement in performance to protect against future deterioration of finances and to maintain its progress towards the financial benchmarks
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as requires improvement by Ofsted. The college is committed to membership of the London Sixth Form Partnership (a new body set up during the area review and referenced as a recommendation in the East and South East London area review report) and other local partnerships, as a route to boost its capacity to improve teaching and learning, and management outcomes, to drive up quality and consistency
- The college's specialisms include A levels; extended project qualifications (EPQ); BTECs at levels 2 and 3 and University of the Arts, London (UAL) provision at level 3. The college offers both academic and general religious education provision, the latter delivered to all students as part of the college's commitment to its Diocesan Trust.

Adult Community Learning Services

London government and providers of Adult Community Learning (ACL), including colleges, to explore recommendations arising from the London. Review of ACL in the review area, including the potential development of a sub-regional community education hub.

In parallel with the London area reviews, London government conducted a review of ACL, which aimed to establish the long term strategic direction for post-19 ACL provision in London, to meet Londoners' needs, and to develop a set of recommendations for commissioning and delivery of ACL provision in London, post devolution. The ACL review recommended that London government should support the development of sub-regional community education hubs either through a single LA, College or Institute for Adult Learning

(the new name for the SDIs); and that a task and finish group should be established to determine SEND need and how best to meet it. These recommendations will be taken forward as part of the implementation of London area reviews.

Pan-London review of SEND and high needs provision

Representatives from the Central London area review to work with colleagues from other sub-regions to support the proposed pan-London review of SEND and high needs provision.

During the London area reviews, representatives nominated by each of the 4 sub-regional steering groups came together to discuss SEND and high needs provision. The group's view was that London providers and London government should consider the potential for a consistent commitment to all SEND and high needs learners, with respect to access and quality of provision. The group agreed though, that data on SEND and high needs provision in London was incomplete and out of date, and that priority should be given to reviewing the current provider map, considering how well services meet existing learner needs, and their capacity to meet projected demand. The group's view was that a review would need to take a wide enough scope to enable recommendations to be made for improvements across planning, commissioning and delivery of SEND and high needs services.

A pan-London SEND and high needs working group will be developed that builds on the SEND group established during the London area reviews. The group will take a strategic overview of SEND and high needs issues across London to ensure equality of access to education and training. It will also monitor the implementation of area review recommendations with respect to SEND issues. The group will consist of representatives from London government (including the sub-regions), national government, colleges and providers and other stakeholders.

Implementation arrangements

The Central sub-region to continue work to develop a sub-regional Skills and Employment Board, to take forward the partnership working developed during the area review. Pan-London implementation arrangements to be put in place to support delivery of the outcomes of the London area reviews.

A London Area Review Implementation Group will be established by the GLA, to support and monitor implementation of the review's recommendations. This will comprise representatives from: DfE's funding agencies; GLA; London Councils; the 4 sub-regional partnerships (Central London Forward, Local London, the South London Partnership and the West London Alliance); the Association of Colleges; the Sixth Form Colleges Association; and a representative of the new SEND pan-London working group. The group will operate from January 2017 through to April 2018, as required, and will report and provide regular updates to the FE Commissioner, the Mayor's Skills for Londoners

taskforce, sub-regional Skills and Employment Boards and the London Regional Committees of the Association of Colleges and Sixth Form College Associations.

Each of London's 4 sub-regions will continue work to develop a sub-regional Skills and Employment Board, to take forward the partnership working developed during the area review.

Capel Manor

There was no specific recommendation concerning Capel Manor College from the London area reviews but as a result of the area reviews, the college has undertaken to:

- continue to work with the land based sector, other London colleges and providers to develop further innovative solutions to ensure all learners across London who seek employment in this sector can cost effectively access the high quality and sustainable land based education and training they need to progress their careers, establish a business or gain permanent employment in the sector in London
- offer new level 4 and level 5 programmes in urban green space management, arboriculture, animal management and zoology and floristry, the latter including new apprenticeship programmes in association with New Covent Garden Market
- set up a sports turf academy, offering apprenticeships in sports turf and green keeping.

Conclusions from this review

The purpose of area reviews is to put colleges on a stronger financial footing whilst also enabling them to better meet the economic and educational needs of students and employers for the long term.

Throughout the review, colleges have worked closely with the GLA, local authorities and the review team, sharing detailed information about their performance and processes. Each local steering group member has been in a position to offer ideas for change, and make comments and assessments about others' proposals and plans for their area. The review team is grateful for the positive approach taken by all the local stakeholders involved in the review.

The issues arising from the area review, summarised in 'The need for change', will be addressed through:

- mergers to ensure that the colleges are financially viable for the future and have the capacity to deliver improvements in quality, this includes the review putting in place, a process to secure partners for Lambeth College and Lewisham Southwark College with capacity to drive improvements to quality and financial sustainability
- plans to grow apprenticeship provision across the review area, and to align the wider curriculum to meet with local and London-wide skills needs, including the development of an apprenticeship brokerage service by Tower Hamlets and Hackney Colleges and Redbridge College
- commitments to preserve locally accessible offers of learning up to level 2 and ensuring sustained and/or strengthened and accessible SEND provision, across the review area and as part of the pan-London review
- plans for collaboration in the implementation phase, which will put in place arrangements to build providers' capacity to respond to changing curriculum, employer and learner needs, as well as to help colleges strengthen their apprenticeship offer, agree strategies for specialisation and ensure a locally coherent and high quality curriculum offer to learners
- the establishment of a pan-London implementation group and the sub-regional skills and employment board which will broaden the area review partnership of boroughs and colleges, to include employers and other learning providers, allowing a joined up approach to curriculum planning in response to the skills needs identified through this review.

Next steps

The agreed recommendations will now be taken forward through recognised structural change processes, including due diligence and consultation.

Proposals for merger, sixth-form college conversion to academies, or ministerial approval, for example of a change in name, will now need intensive work by all parties involved to realise the benefits identified. Colleges will want to give consideration to making timely applications for support from the [Restructuring Facility](#), where they can demonstrate that the changes cannot be funded through other sources. Colleges exploring academy conversion will be subject to the application process and agreement by the Sixth Form College Commissioner and the Regional Schools Commissioner.

Primary responsibility for implementation of recommendations relating to individual colleges rests with those institutions. However, it will be important to understand how progress is going in the round in each area and each set of area review recommendations will be formally monitored at both national and local levels. As the [guidance](#) produced for LEPs and local authorities sets out all those involved in the local steering group will be expected to play their full part in ensuring that changes happen within the timescale agreed. In this context, LEPs and local authorities are expected to retain their focus on driving changes, and assessing how implementation of recommendations is contributing to local economic performance. The EFA and SFA, with oversight from the FE Commissioner and Sixth Form College Commissioner, will also be monitoring progress across all areas.

A national evaluation of the area review process will be undertaken to assess the benefits brought about through implementation of options. It will include quantitative measures relating to the economy, to educational performance, to progression, to other measures of quality, and to financial sustainability. This analysis will also take account of the views of colleges, local authorities, LEPs, students and employers about how well colleges are responding to the challenges of helping address local skills gaps and shortages, and the education and training needs of individuals.



Department
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Reference: DFE-00064-2017



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