



Department
for Education

West 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 covered a total of 46 colleges, including 30 general further education colleges, 12 sixth-form colleges, 3 specialist designated institutions (SDIs) and a 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 4 areas were carried out in line with published guidance. Each of the 4 area 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 steering group for West London was chaired by the leader of the London Borough of Hounslow. The steering group met on 6 occasions between March 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), the West London Alliance²; West London boroughs, 2 business representatives (one of whom was vice chair); the Further Education (FE) Commissioner; the Deputy FE Commissioner; the Sixth Form College Commissioner, the Regional Schools Commissioner, and representatives of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Education Funding Agency (EFA), and DfE. The London Area Review Steering Group met on 4 occasions between February and November 2016, considering issues and outcomes emerging from the 4 sub-regional reviews, identifying cross-cutting themes and concerns, and providing advice back to inform the local process.

¹ London Councils

² West London Alliance

Visits to colleges and support throughout the process were 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 Reviews, 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 presented to the final London area review steering group.

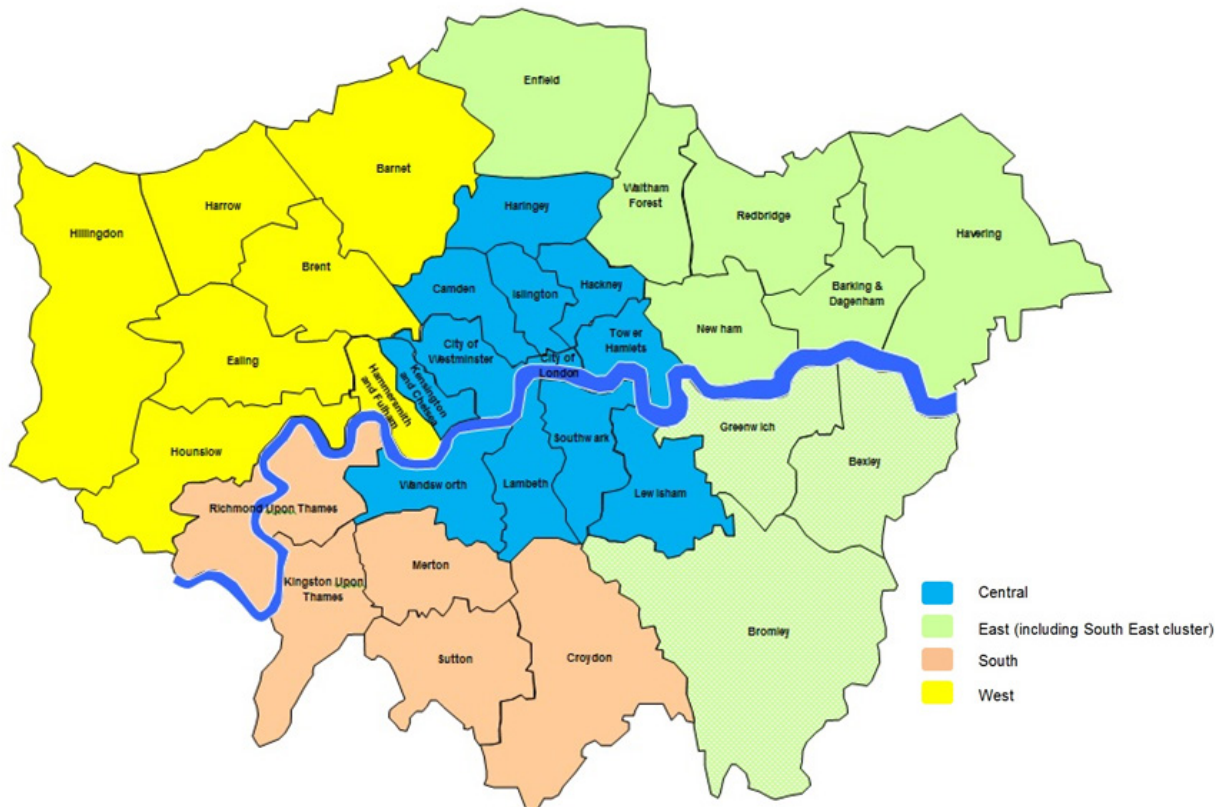
The needs of the West London sub-region area

Demographics and the economy

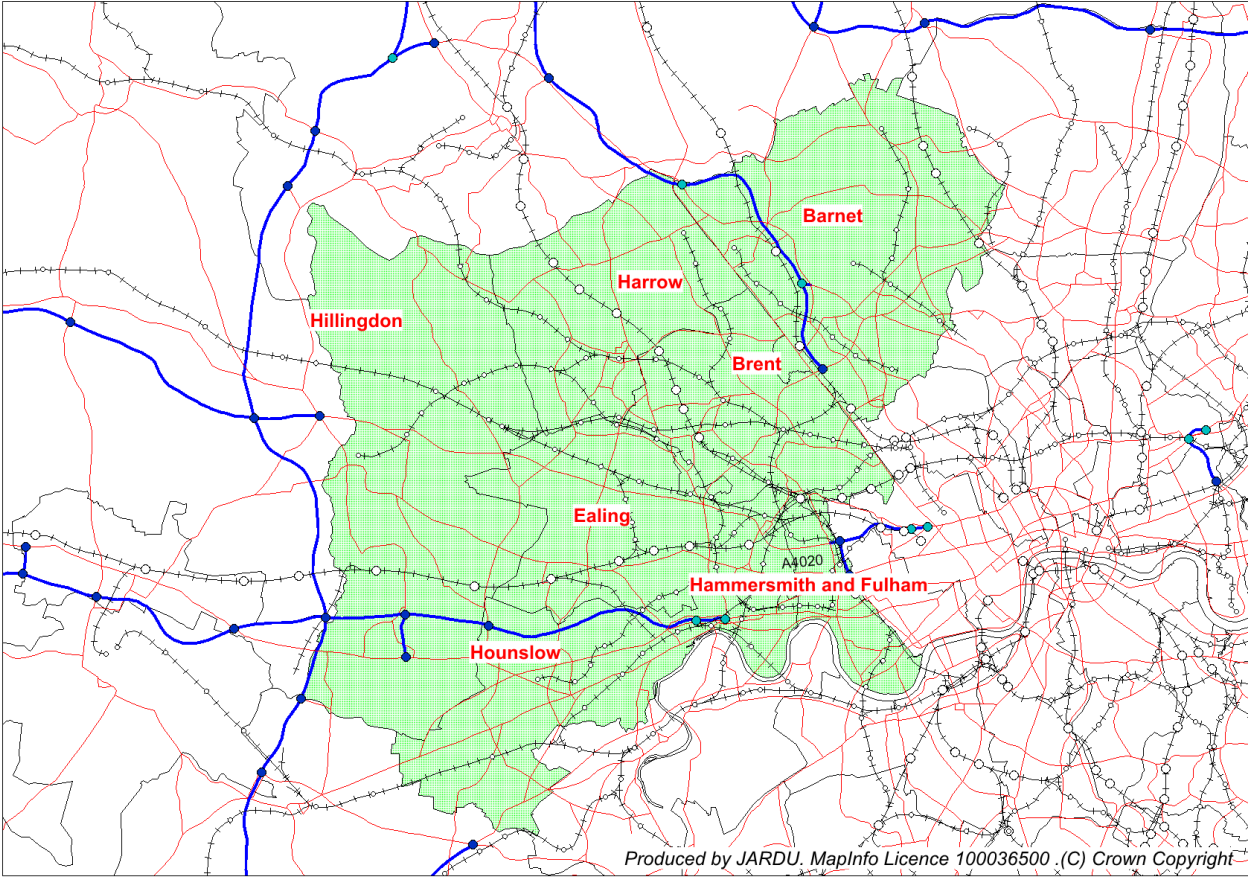
The West London area review covered 7 local authority areas (London Boroughs):

- Barnet Council
- Brent Council
- Ealing Council
- Hammersmith and Fulham Council
- Harrow Council
- Hillingdon Council
- Hounslow Council.

The West London area in scope for the review is marked in yellow on the map of the wider London area below:



The location of the 7 local authority areas which cover the West London review area is 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.

| | Barnet | Brent | Ealing | Hammersmith and Fulham | Harrow | Hillingdon | Hounslow | London | Great Britain |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Total population (2015) | 379,700 | 324,000 | 343,100 | 179,400 | 247,100 | 297,700 | 268,800 | 8,673,700 | 63,258,400 |
| Population aged 16 to 64 | 64.9% | 67.8% | 66.8% | 72.2% | 64.5% | 65.6% | 67.6% | 68.1% | 63.3% |
| % with higher education qualifications ⁴ | 49.1 | 45.1 | 49.7 | 67.4 | 47.9 | 40.2 | 45.4 | 49.80 | 37.10 |
| Those formally qualified to level 2+ | 77.8% | 72.5% | 72.8% | 64.6% | 77.0% | 73.2% | 73.2% | 76.10% | 73.60% |
| Gross weekly pay £ of residents | 638.7 | 550.0 | 581.0 | 700.2 | 634.7 | 613.3 | 583.5 | 632.4 | 541.0 |
| Gross weekly pay £ by workplace | 599.0 | 574.8 | 557.2 | 669.2 | 574.9 | 621.2 | 689.9 | 670.8 | 540.2 |

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

| | Barnet | Brent | Ealing | Hammersmith and Fulham | Harrow | Hillingdon | Hounslow | London | Great Britain |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Out-of-work benefit claimants | 1.5% | 2.4% | 2.2% | 2.4% | 1.2% | 1.4% | 2.2% | 1.8% | 1.8% |
| % of main benefit claimants | 6.2 | 8.3 | 7.9 | 8.4 | 5.4 | 6.5 | 6.1 | 7.7 | 8.7 |
| Jobs density ⁵ | 0.68 | 0.60 | 0.69 | 1.15 | 0.56 | 1.15 | 0.92 | 0.96 | 0.82 |
| Total workplace units: | | | | | | | | | |
| Micro ⁶ | 90.5% | 88.5% | 88.6% | 85.2% | 91.4% | 84.2% | 86.7% | 86.2% | 83.6% |
| Small | 7.9% | 9.0% | 9.1% | 11.9% | 7.1% | 11.6% | 10.0% | 11.0% | 13.3% |
| Medium | 1.6% | 2.1% | 2.0% | 2.6% | 1.3% | 3.5% | 2.7% | 2.4% | 2.7% |
| Large | 0.1% | 0.3% | 0.3% | 0.4% | 0.1% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 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 West London area have a higher proportion of population aged 16-64 than London as a whole and the national average
- the percentage of people with higher level qualifications in all West London authorities, as in London as a whole, is significantly greater than the national average. Of the West London boroughs, Hammersmith and Fulham has the highest percentage of residents with higher level qualifications by some margin with Hillingdon the least
- there are more residents qualified to level 2 or above in West London than the national average, but fewer than the average for London as a whole
- the percentage of out-of-work benefit claimants is broadly comparable with the national average, although Brent, Ealing and Hammersmith and Fulham are higher
- gross weekly pay for residents is lower than the London average.

Patterns of employment and future growth

The West London Alliance confirmed that it expects planned regeneration and development projects to deliver 92,800 new homes and 136,000 jobs in the West London region over the next 20 years.

The top 5 industry sectors in West London, in terms of the number of employees, are currently:

- wholesale and retail
- transport and storage
- professional, real estate, scientific and technical
- administrative and support service activities
- health and social work.

Projections provided by the West London Alliance suggest that 50,000 new employee jobs will be created in the sub-region by 2022⁷ not including replacement demand. The projections assume the current balance of employers by sector remains broadly constant, and indicate that the 3 areas of highest growth in the sub-region will be:

- professional, scientific and technical industries
- accommodation and food
- health.

Further information on patterns of employment and future growth in the West London sub-region and London as a whole can be found in the GLA Economics reports that were shared with the West London steering group: 'Trends in demand for labour and skills in London and the West Sub-region' and 'Trends in demand for labour and skills across London as a whole'⁸.

Sub-regional priorities

The West London Alliance identified priorities for skills and curriculum across all levels of learning, including:

- potential for an increase in access to higher level skills (level 4+) through specialisation by colleges (in collaboration with employers) including:
 - business, management, administration, sales and marketing
 - high technology, transportation, storage and distribution

⁷ West London Economic Assessment

⁸ GLA Economics: Trends in the demand for labour and skills in London and the West Sub-region

- high technology, food manufacture
- broadcasting and associated industries.
- ensuring a high quality, high volume offer, across the sub-region, in sectors already characterised by high employer demand, in particular:
 - construction, engineering, manufacturing, IT
 - health and social care, teaching, nursing, medical and dental care support
 - business management, administration, marketing and sales
- sufficient access to an effective and high quality curriculum for those with special education needs and disabilities, offering a range of outcomes-focused and person-centred programmes, enabling effective preparation for adulthood, employment, community inclusion, independent living and good health
- a locally accessible offer of foundation skills for all West London residents covering
 - entrepreneurialism
 - resilience
 - English
 - English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
 - science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)
 - employability skills
- improvements to careers information, advice and guidance (IAG), in particular relating to future employment opportunities, for parents and young people.

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

Feedback from the LEP⁹, sub-regional partnership (West London Alliance), local authority representatives, employers and other stakeholders consulted during the area review process drew attention to the need to:

- raise the skills levels of residents with low or no skills and reduce the number of 19 year olds leaving full time education without a level 3 qualification
- increase the quality and capacity of education to deliver higher level qualifications in priority West London industries where higher level skills are in demand
- improve job opportunities for the 5% of 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
- make a high quality basic skills offer accessible to the most vulnerable residents in particular:
 - those in and leaving care
 - young offenders

⁹ Reference to engagement with the LEP relates to London's former Local Enterprise Partnership as the London LEP has recently been reconstituted

- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners
- learners with disabilities and/or learning support needs
- provide support for all learners to make appropriate choices about both subject choice and learning provider
- have sufficient, quality, accessible special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision with real opportunities for employment to be achieved by:
 - developing the expertise of the SEND workforce, leadership and administration (including personal care)
 - building strong relationships with schools, employers, LAs and parents
 - providing access to a range of therapeutic/health services (occupational therapy/speech and language therapy, emotional, physical and spiritual therapy/child and adolescent mental health services)
 - developing robust joined-up progression pathways for learners age 14-25 with SEND in all localities, including but not limited to progression through qualifications
 - high-quality SEND systems that enable learner access to the full variety of academic and technical learning, including apprenticeships
 - a curriculum strategy that offers person-centred programmes and flexibility for those with SEND
 - an expanded range of entry level 1 and 2 options across the area
 - a systematic approach to planning the curriculum to enable all learners to access the full range of academic and technical learning, including apprenticeships and supported internships
 - a differentiated and flexible approach enabling learners with different learning styles to make progress, including bespoke interventions and accommodating neurodiversity.

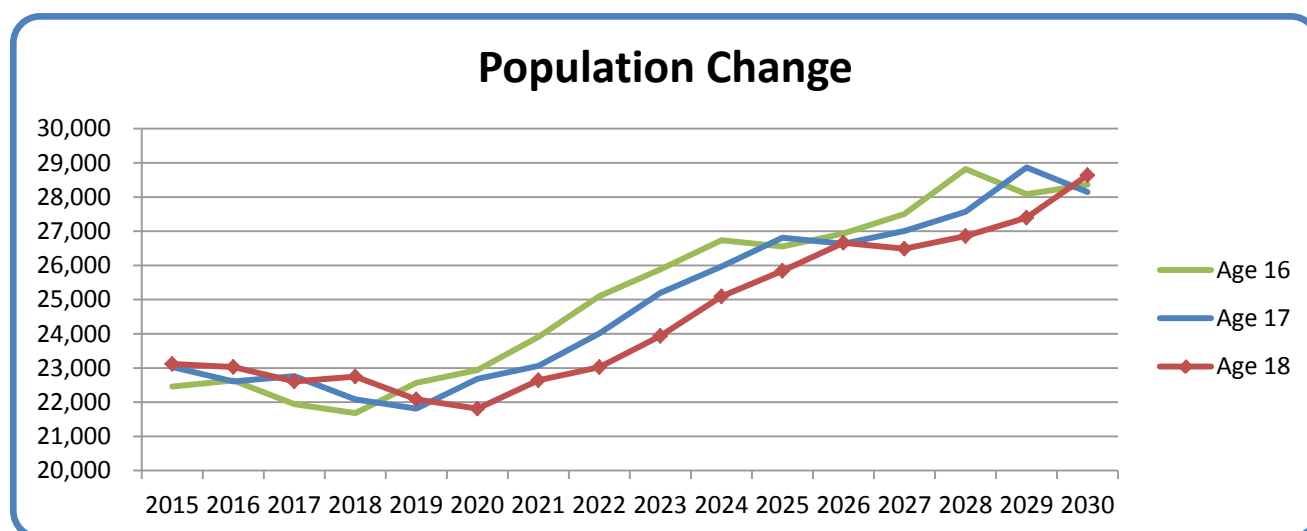
For each area review the National Union of Students submitted a report on the views of students which was considered by the steering group. Where the NUS submitted a report these are available on [NUS connect](#).

The colleges that took 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 West London, the numbers of young people aged 16 to 18 is declining until 2020 when numbers are projected to increase, as shown in the chart below¹⁰.



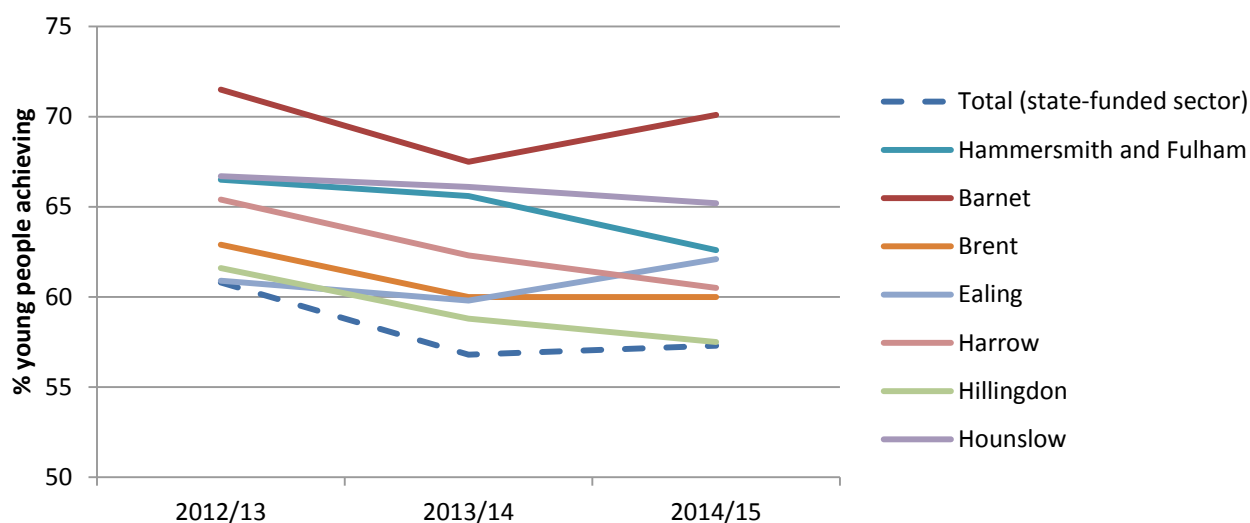
Performance of schools at Key Stage 4

The recent trend in GCSE pass rates for 16 year old school pupils completing year 11 across the West London region is illustrated overleaf¹¹.

¹⁰ ONS sub-national population projections – see data annex: Population projections

¹¹ 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 all the West London local authorities is above the national average. There has been a drop in performance for most boroughs since 2012 to 2013, in line with national trends. Only the boroughs of Barnet and Ealing have seen increases in performance since 2013 to 2014. Barnet has been the highest performing borough within the review area over the 3 year period.¹²

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 99 funded schools with sixth-forms in the review area, including 24 local authority maintained, 71 academies, 3 studio schools and a university technical college¹³. Most school pupils in the age range 16 to 18 are enrolled on A level courses.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

Overall funded student numbers in mainstream school sixth-forms increased by 210 students in the 3 years 2013 to 2014 to 2015 to 2016 with a total of 23,427 young people funded in a mainstream sixth-form setting in 2015 to 2016¹⁴. 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 56 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.

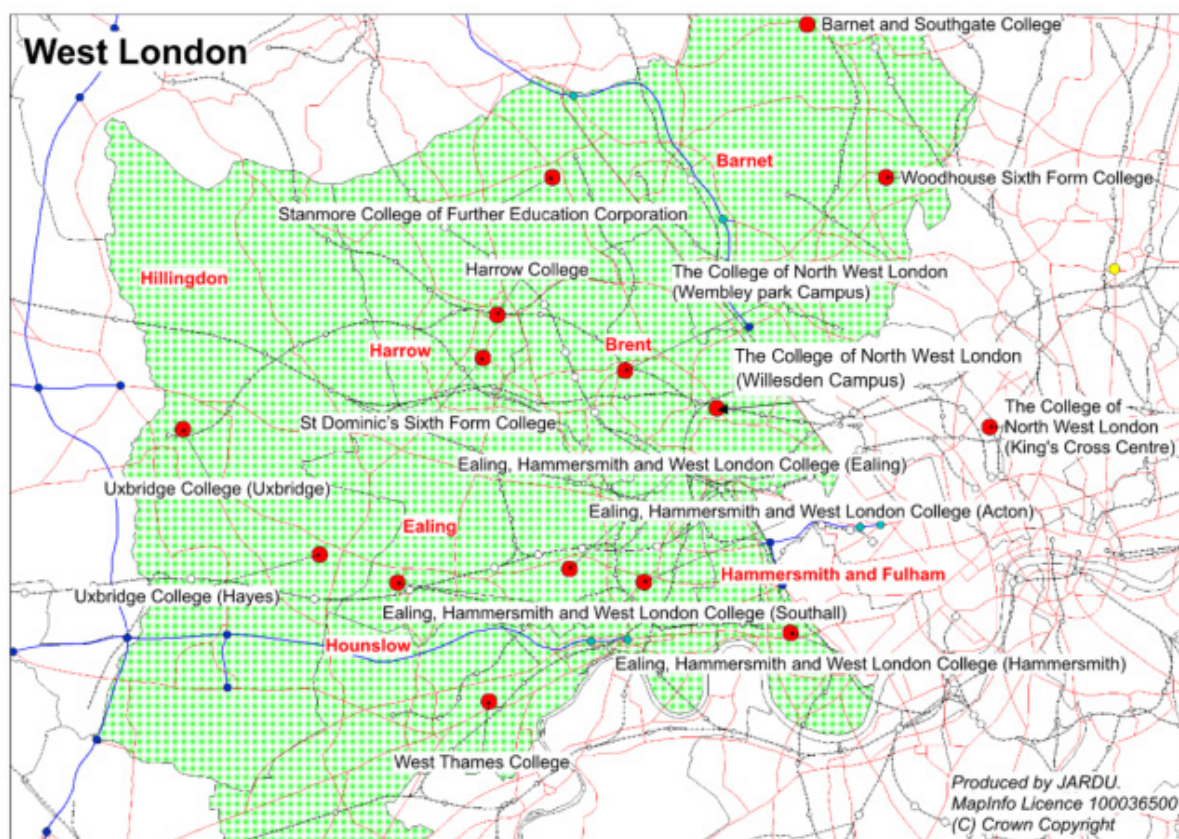
The further education and sixth-form colleges

Nine colleges (2 sixth-form colleges and 7 general further education colleges) participated in this review:

- Barnet and Southgate College
- The College of North West London
- Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College
- Harrow College
- Stanmore College of Further Education Corporation
- Uxbridge College
- West Thames College
- St Dominic's Sixth Form College
- Woodhouse Sixth Form College.

¹⁴ EFA allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding.

The location of the main campuses for 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 the general further education colleges offer apprenticeships. The most popular subjects are business administration and law and health, public services and social care. There is limited apprenticeships delivery in construction, planning and the built environment, information and communication technology, leisure, travel and tourism, agriculture, horticulture and animal care and education and training. There is also a very limited offer for higher apprenticeships from general further education colleges in the West London review area.

All the colleges in the review area deliver A level provision. Of the further education colleges, Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College delivers the most A level provision. The 2 sixth-form colleges offer a similar amount of A level provision. A range of subjects are offered at A level by both further education colleges and sixth-form colleges with the most popular subjects being mathematics, biology, and chemistry.

All the colleges in the review area deliver technical (non A level) provision. Barnet and Southgate College delivers the most technical provision and Woodhouse College the least. A wide range of technical provision is offered by the colleges, mostly at level 2 and below, particularly as the most popular provision is for 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. All the FE 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 ¹⁵ | EFA allocations (2015 to 16) ¹⁶ | SFA allocations (2015 to 16) ¹⁷ | Total college income (2014 to 2015) 000s ¹⁸ |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Barnet and Southgate College | Good (November 2015) | £18,250,137 | £14,786,397 | £45,612 |
| The College of North West London | Good (November 2015) | £6,470,438 | £9,915,962 | £24,713 |
| Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College | Inadequate (October 2015) | £16,248,175 | £13,465,780 | £45,645 |
| Harrow College | Requires Improvement (May 2016) | £11,384,787 | £5,778,013 | £21,333 |
| Stanmore College of Further Education | Inadequate (September 2015) | £8,107,611 | £1,543,428 | £11,050 |
| Uxbridge College | Outstanding (May 2008) | £20,602,595 | £6,179,400 | £30,795 |
| West Thames College | Good (March 2014) | £11,167,189 | £4,384,483 | £22,516 |
| St Dominic's Sixth Form College | Outstanding (April 2008) | £5,658,655 | | £5,701 |
| Woodhouse Sixth Form | Outstanding | £6,372,101 | | £6,688 |

15 Ofsted – see data annex: College inspection reports

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

17 SFA allocations – see data annex: Adult funding

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

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|---------|
| College | (January 2007) | | | |
| Capel Manor College ¹⁹ | 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. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and Stanmore College are subject to a notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency.

The condition of college buildings varies. 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.

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, 6 of which are in the West 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 education²⁰

All the boroughs in the West London review area have more than 40% of young people progressing to higher education compared to a national progress rate of 35.4% for the United Kingdom.²¹

There is a wide range of partnerships and forms of collaboration between London higher education institutions (HEIs), colleges and 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

¹⁹ Figures for Capel Manor represent all activity (across all London boroughs and beyond) and are replicated in all 4 London area review reports.

²⁰ HEFCE POLAR 3 - see data annex: Higher education progression

²¹ Derived from HEFCE POLAR 3 - see data annex: Higher education progression

- some continuous professional development support to FE teachers
- access for colleges to HE electronic resources
- senior HEI staff sitting on college governing bodies.

Provision for students with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and high needs²²

In 2015 to 2016, the EFA funded 1,398 post-16 places across Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow local authorities in colleges, special schools and specialist post 16 institutions. Colleges delivered 609 funded places between them. The colleges delivering the highest numbers of funded places were Barnet and Southgate College, Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College and Harrow College.

During the review, local authorities expressed the view that the high needs provision offered by colleges could be strengthened so that there were more opportunities for employment.

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 exist 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, colleges in the West London review area delivered 5,530 apprenticeships²³. There were 17,330 apprenticeships delivered in the West London review area in the same period (66% were at intermediate level and 32% were at advanced level). There were 320 higher level apprenticeships delivered. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College was the largest contributor of higher level apprenticeships.

Overall, the most popular sector subject areas were business, administration and law, engineering and manufacturing technologies, health, public services and care, and retail and commercial enterprise.

²² EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding: High needs

²³ Numbers of apprenticeships by provider and LA – see data annex: Apprenticeships

There were 25 independent training providers publicly funded in 2014 to 2015 to deliver apprenticeships within the 7 London boroughs in the West London review area. These providers delivered 11,560 apprenticeships between them.

Colleges will need to take account of the market position held by other providers, in setting their apprenticeship and other curriculum strategies.

This pattern may change in 2017, with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy²⁴.

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 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 250²⁵. 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

²⁴ Apprenticeship funding: how it will work

²⁵ Number of apprenticeships by provider – see data annex: Apprenticeships

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.

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.

London government and West London Alliance also set out their priorities for provision in the West London review area including:

- offering more apprenticeship opportunities and progression routes to higher level technical skills, particularly in sectors such as construction, advanced engineering, ICT/digital and health and care related areas
- ensuring a locally accessible offer of learning up to level 2, including provision for ESOL and SEND
- ensuring sharing of expertise in SEND to create a highly skilled workforce
- high quality information advice and guidance, employer engagement, leadership and administration
- providing positive, flexible and person-centred approaches that improve employment and preparing for adulthood outcomes for vulnerable learners.

The key areas for change

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

- ensuring the review identifies a sustainable future for local provision, or is otherwise assured about the viability of all colleges, in particular the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London and Stanmore College which were subject to a notice of concern from the Skills Funding Agency
- developing a strategy for curriculum planning and specialisation that builds on colleges' strengths and avoids unnecessary duplication of provision. This will be important in subject areas such as construction, which is already delivered in a number of colleges and will continue to be a popular subject
- providing a broader, higher quality, accessible SEND offer and clearer pathways across the review area.

Initial options raised during visits to colleges

During their visits, which took place before the first area review steering group, 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 discussed included the possibility of a 3 to 4 college merger between Barnet and Southgate College, Waltham Forest College (part of East sub-region), College of North East London (part of Central sub-region) and potentially Hertford Regional College; and Harrow College merging with Stanmore College or Barnet and Southgate College and/or with other colleges and/or providers
- the potential of collaboration to reduce costs and for sharing services. Stanmore College discussed the potential for a shared services partnership with Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College or with the College of North West London
- remaining as a stand-alone college 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. Both St Dominic's Sixth Form College and Woodhouse Sixth Form College considered conversion to an academy in the future.

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 F²⁶ (revised March 2016).

²⁶ Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions: updated guidance on area reviews Annex F, Pages 49-53

Recommendations agreed by the steering group

Nine recommendations, including 3 pan-London recommendations were agreed by the steering group at their meeting in November 2016. These were:

- Barnet and Southgate College to merge with Waltham Forest College, with a target completion date of 31 July 2017. In addition, the pan-London area review steering group recommended that the 2 colleges use The London Apprenticeship Training Group to grow the offer of apprenticeships, taking account of the curriculum requirements identified by their respective steering groups. Barnet and Southgate College also to work with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, 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
- The College of North West London to merge with the City of Westminster College, with a target completion date of August 2017, and with potential for a further expansion of their multi-college group to include South Thames College and/or Lambeth College, subject to decisions taken by those colleges and the relevant steering groups
- Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College to remain a stand-alone college, developing its curriculum offer through partnership with the University of Middlesex, and in response to the needs and priorities identified in through this review. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, in partnership with local boroughs and independent training providers, will establish an employer and learner-facing hub, to improve clarity of the offer
- Harrow, Uxbridge, West Thames and Stanmore Colleges to merge, with a target completion date of August 2017
- St Dominic's Sixth Form College to pursue academisation, as either a single academy trust or as part of a multi-academy trust (MAT)
- Woodhouse Sixth Form College to pursue academy conversion in context of an application for a free school in Enfield by March 2017
- 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 West 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 West London 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:

Barnet and Southgate College

Barnet and Southgate College to merge with Waltham Forest College, with a target completion date of 31 July 2017. In addition, the London area review steering group recommended that the 2 colleges use The London Apprenticeship Training Group to grow the offer of apprenticeships, taking account of the curriculum requirements identified by their respective steering groups. Barnet and Southgate College also to work with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, 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 merged college will deliver high quality skills training in most of the wider GLA key growth sectors identified as critical for London’s economy, including accountancy, finance, construction, digital skills, media, health sciences and engineering. The launch of the London Apprenticeship Training Group (comprising the colleges involved in the merger, the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London and Hertford Regional College) will respond to the sub-region’s priority to increase the number of apprenticeships. In addition, there will be opportunities to rationalise specialist technical skills provision, for example in hospitality and catering, engineering, construction and digital skills, providing centres of excellence which are accessible to all across North and East London. The merger will also support GLA’s priority of providing more pre-level 2 provision and will continue to deliver a broad local community offer for young people and adults. Barnet and Southgate College will continue to work with the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, 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
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment has demonstrated that the merger would release significant cost savings in curriculum, management and support functions, leading to enhanced financial sustainability and progress towards those financial benchmarks not already achieved
- in respect of quality of provision, Waltham Forest College is currently rated as satisfactory by Ofsted and Barnet and Southgate College is rated good. With the great majority of course areas judged good or outstanding by Ofsted, the combined college will be well placed to spread good practice to all areas
- the merger would continue to support and strengthen the specialisms of the 2 colleges which have been identified by GLA as priorities for the review including construction, engineering, health and social care, business and digital skills, ESOL and learning for learners with students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The College of North West London

The College of North West London to merge with the City of Westminster College, with a target completion date of August 2017, and with potential for a further expansion of their multi-college group 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 and broaden 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 including construction, engineering, IT, ESOL and provision for learners with high needs.

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College to remain a stand-alone college, developing its curriculum offer through partnership with the University of Middlesex, and in response to the needs and priorities identified in through this review. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College, in partnership with local boroughs and independent training providers, will establish an employer and learner-facing hub, to improve clarity of the offer.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college will build on its existing strategic partnerships (such as its partnership with the West London Business Alliance) to ensure the offer continues to meet local need and to undertake a detailed curriculum mapping exercise to identify any duplication of resources and to create a clear curriculum pathway with identified specialisms. The college is also looking into the creation of centres of excellence and to create opportunities for co-location and

wider strategic dialogue with local authorities on education, skills and employment needs

- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment indicated that the college currently achieves the majority of benchmarks and operating performance is progressing towards the benchmark. The college has removed duplicate provision and has reduced its costs considerably over the last 25 months
- in respect of quality of provision: the college was inspected in October 2015 and assessed as inadequate. The latest monitoring visit in November 2016 noted that significant progress had been made in improving outcomes for learners and to improve the quality of teaching and the college continues to successfully deliver its improvement plan. The college intends to continue to work in partnership with other local colleges and key employers to strengthen quality by sharing good practice. The college has also invested in upskilling the college workforce in good practice by having a 3 year strategic partnership with the Education Training Foundation in a continuous professional development delivery programme
- the college's expertise in higher level apprenticeship programmes such as higher and degree apprenticeships could also be exploited in the future through new structures such as establishing an Institute of Technology.

Harrow, Uxbridge, West Thames and Stanmore Colleges

Harrow, Uxbridge, West Thames and Stanmore Colleges to merge, with a target completion date of August 2017.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the merger will provide strengthened further education provision in the 3 boroughs in which the colleges are located, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow – and the wider West London area, for the benefit of students, employers and the wider community. The combined strength of the colleges will provide a broad, high-quality technical offer across 14 sector subject areas, offering progression routes from entry level through to level 3 and to higher level provision in several specialist areas. The overwhelming majority of provision at the colleges aligns with the GLA priority areas, providing a good platform for further development including a joint apprenticeship offer
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial assessment of the financial option has demonstrated that the merger would produce a financially strong college at or exceeding the benchmarks (whilst enabling the college to capitalise on economies of scale by realising significant cost savings in curriculum, management and support functions, leading to significantly enhanced financial sustainability)
- Harrow College was assessed as requires improvement, Uxbridge College was assessed as outstanding, West Thames College was assessed as good, and Stanmore College was assessed as inadequate by Ofsted. Bringing the colleges together will enable good practice to be shared. The aim for the merged college will be to move to an outstanding Ofsted assessment

- the new college's specialisms will be developed from existing specialisms and to add new specialisms in particular sectors of expertise, including science, technology, engineering and maths, which are GLA priorities.

The Corporation of Stanmore College, after considering a range of options presented to the college following a Further Education Commissioner led Structure and Prospects Appraisal, has chosen a merger with West Hertfordshire College as the preferred option. The Corporation made its final decision in relation to this after taking account of the deliberations of a panel meeting to review the options which included local stakeholders.

St Dominic's Sixth Form College

St Dominic's Sixth Form College to pursue academisation, as either a single academy trust or as part of a multi-academy trust.

This option will be subject to support from the Westminster Diocese. Should the option to academise not be taken forward for any reason, the college will remain stand-alone.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college will continue its strong partnerships with their 2 Catholic feeder schools, sharing teachers, resources and leadership expertise and meeting as a group of head teachers and chairs 6 times per academic year. The college will also continue to work in close partnership with the St. Marylebone Teaching Alliance in Westminster and is the maths hub lead institution for the Alliance
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college currently falls short of meeting financial benchmarks and will need to set out plans to secure savings and efficiencies and move towards financial benchmarks in its application for academy conversion
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed by Ofsted as outstanding; becoming an academy will create opportunities to further share good practice with partner schools locally
- as an academy, the college would continue to focus on its current specialist areas which support GLA priorities.

Woodhouse Sixth Form College

Woodhouse Sixth Form College to pursue academy conversion which will run alongside an application for a 16-19 free school in Enfield by March 2017.

The college may form a MAT and is in discussions with local schools. If the college's proposals for academy conversion is not successful, the college will continue as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college is oversubscribed and large numbers progress to university. This is expected to continue if it remains stand-alone or becomes an academy and forms a MAT. The area review process has led to conversations and nascent partnerships with a number of schools and colleges, which might otherwise have not taken place, which will help to further enhance the quality of teaching at the college
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college currently falls short of meeting financial benchmarks and will need to set out plans to secure savings and efficiencies in its application for academy conversion. If the college forms a MAT this will provide opportunities for sharing costs. If the college remains as stand-alone it will need to take steps to address operating performance in order to move towards the published benchmark, and for which there are plans to withdraw some subjects in decline and reduced staffing in some areas will bring cost savings
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as outstanding by Ofsted and partnerships with local schools will provide an opportunity to share good practice
- becoming part of a MAT will bring opportunities to enhance the college specialisms by sharing practice, including STEM, a GLA priority.

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 West 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 West London 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:

- actions to grow the area's apprenticeship offer, taking account of the skills priorities identified through the review and including growth of the offer by colleges. Two new college-led apprenticeship companies have been or will be created as a result of the review, including the London Apprenticeship Training Company (involving Barnet and Southgate College) which will extend across to East London and into Hertfordshire. The proposed mergers of Harrow, Uxbridge and West Thames Colleges; and of the College of North West London and City of Westminster College will allow a more efficient and targeted offer to be made to employers and learners across the colleges' catchment areas
- working with the West London Alliance and GLA to provide a joined up approach to the development and delivery of apprenticeships
- commitments from all steering group members to ensure a broad, local offer of learning up to, and including level 2, across the review area
- pan-London agreements to review SEND and high needs provision across the capital, with West London boroughs committing to work together and with colleges, schools and private and community services, to improve the sub-regional offer, as well as share and improve the quality of data available to plan and deliver services
- agreements by 6 of the further education colleges to pursue mergers, which will, according to data available at the time of the review, enable the educationally stronger colleges within each of the mergers to share and embed effective practice. Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College's proposal to develop a partnership with the University of Middlesex will also provide access to specialist subject knowledge, and support progression to higher education
- 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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