



Department  
for Education

# **York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Area Review**

**Final Report**

**August 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.

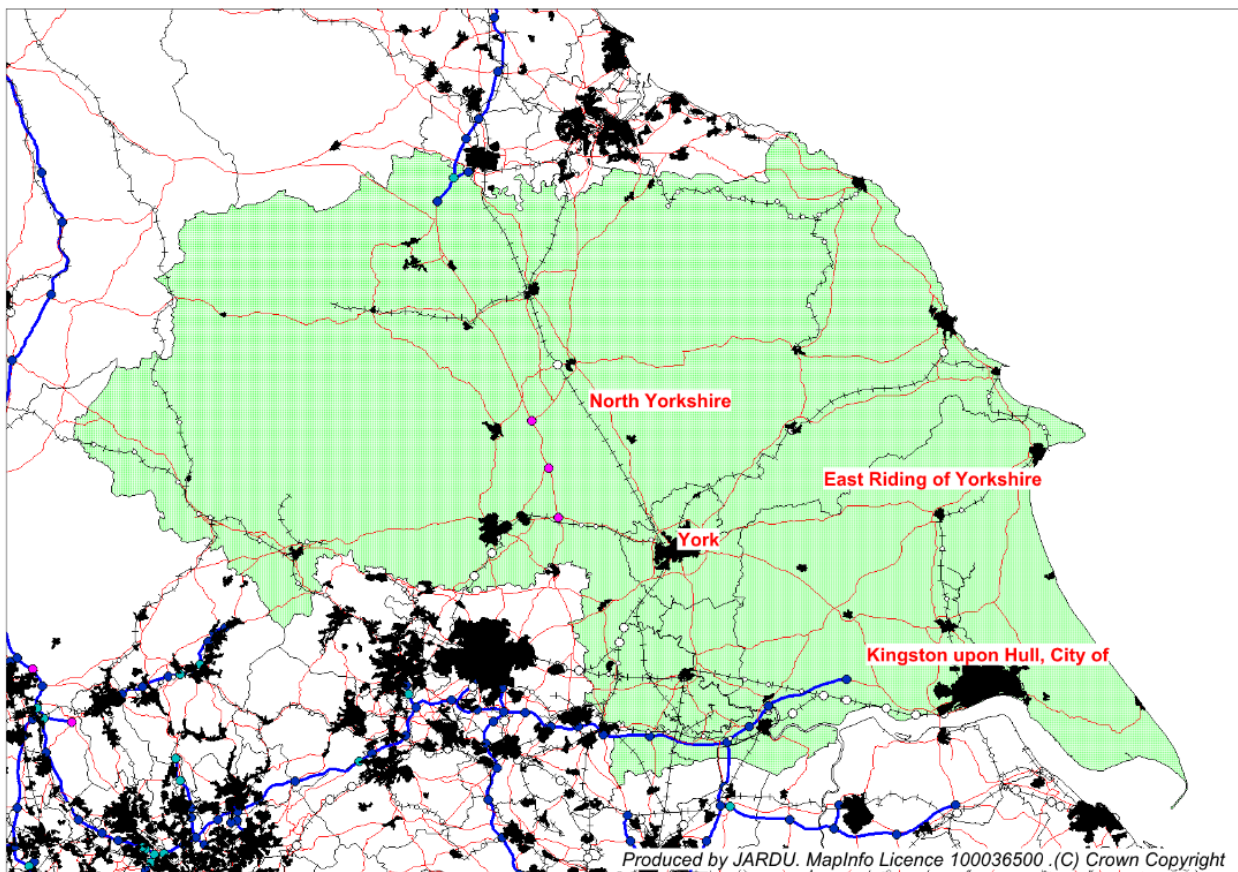
The local steering group was chaired by the Sixth Form College Commissioner. The steering group met on 5 occasions between October 2016 and February 2017 and additional informal meetings took place to consider and develop options in greater detail. Membership of the steering group comprised each college's chair of governors and principal/chief executive officer, representatives from City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Hull City Council, the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership, the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership, the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, the Regional Schools Commissioner, and representatives from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Department for Education (DfE).

Visits to colleges and support throughout the process were provided by staff from the Further Education Commissioner's team and the Sixth Form College Commissioner's team. 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 undertook consultations with local stakeholders.

# The needs of the York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull area

## Demographics and the economy

The York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull area review covers the 4 local authority areas of City of York Council, North Yorkshire County Council, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Hull City Council and spans an area of over 10,700 km<sup>2</sup>. Three Local Enterprise Partnerships work in the review area: the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership; the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership, which covers Hull and East Riding on the north bank of the river Humber and North and North East Lincolnshire on the south bank; and the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership area includes the districts of York, Selby, Harrogate and Craven. This latter area is also covered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. The area is illustrated on the map below:



The table below provides a snapshot of key demographic and economic data<sup>1</sup>, which has acted as a starting point for this review.

	York	North Yorkshire	East Riding	Hull	Great Britain
Total population (2015)	206,900	602,300	336,700	259,000	63,258,400
Population aged 16 to 64	66.4%	59.7%	59.2%	66.0%	63.3%
% with higher education qualifications <sup>2</sup>	40.6%	36.2%	35.0%	22.2%	37.1%
Those formally qualified to level 2+ <sup>2</sup>	81.1%	75.4%	76.5%	66.0%	73.6%
Gross weekly pay £ of residents	509.6	489.1	526.3	454.0	541.0
Gross weekly pay £ by workplace	505.4	475.4	483.6	494.1	540.2
Out-of-work benefit claimants	0.7%	1.4%	1.5%	3.7%	1.9%
% of main benefit claimants	5.0%	5.8%	6.8%	14.4%	8.6%
Jobs density <sup>3</sup>	0.85	0.96	0.69	0.76	0.83
<b>Total workplace units:</b>	<b>York</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>East Riding</b>	<b>Hull</b>	<b>Average for the review area</b>
Micro <sup>4</sup>	79.4%	85.4%	85.4%	75.3%	82.1%

1 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.

2 Percentages relate to those aged 16 to 64

3 Job density relates to the level of jobs per resident aged 16 to 64. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64.

4 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).

<b>Total workplace units:</b>	<b>York</b>	<b>North Yorkshire</b>	<b>East Riding</b>	<b>Hull</b>	<b>Average for the review area</b>
Small	16.8%	12.5%	12.15	19.6%	14.4%
Medium	3.5%	1.9%	2.2%	4.4%	3.1%
Large	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%	0.5%

The key points to note are:

- the working age population resident in Hull holds considerably lower qualifications than those in other parts of the review area. 66% have qualifications to level 2 or above and 22% hold higher education qualifications. These proportions are both well below the national averages of 74% and 37% respectively
- by contrast, York has a higher proportion of its working age residents qualified both to level 2 and with higher level skills
- gross weekly pay both for local residents and by workplace is below the national average for all 4 local authority areas
- there are relatively low rates of out-of-work benefit claimants in most of the review area, but in Hull the rate is 3.5%, markedly higher than the national average of 1.8%, the same pattern is true of the percentage of main benefit claimants across the area
- of the 4 local authority areas, job density is highest in North Yorkshire (0.96 jobs per 16 to 64 year old resident) and York (0.85), but is below the national average (of 0.83) in East Riding and Hull (0.69 and 0.76 respectively)
- whilst the review area is dominated by micro and small businesses (over 80% of business are micro and between 9% and 15% are small), Hull has a relatively higher percentage of medium and large businesses.

## **Patterns of employment and future growth**

There is expected to be an increase of over 33,000 jobs in the review area as a whole in the period up to 2031, with the largest increase being predicted to be in low pay, low skilled jobs in the visitor economy, retail, warehousing and in the care sector. There are also significant increases expected in professional services and construction. The biggest decrease is forecast to be in manufacturing, although this is likely to be slightly mitigated by jobs to be created in potash mining and supporting industries in North Yorkshire.

The population of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP area is 1.14m, which is growing mainly due to inward migration. The current proportion of the population aged over

65 is 22.7% compared to 17.8% nationally and by 2037 this will rise to 31%, so this will present challenges around an ageing workforce and replacement demand in key sectors. The LEP<sup>5</sup> regards upskilling of the existing workforce as vital to economic growth, particularly with the replacement demand due to workers retiring (27% of the current workforce is expected to retire by 2022).

There are 51,365 businesses in the LEP area, 89.1% of which have less than 10 employees. The number of businesses is growing, but at a slower rate than nationally, although business survival rates are higher.

There are 514,000 people employed in the LEP area with 1 in 8 of these working in the healthcare sector. In 5 of the 9 districts in the area, manufacturing or accommodation and food serving are the largest sectors. IT, finance and insurance and business administration and support services are less prominent.

39.6% of residents have a qualification at level 4 or above, compared to 35.8% nationally and the area generally has low levels of unemployment at around 3.5%. However there are pockets of deprivation, of higher unemployment and low skills, particularly along parts of the coast and in some major towns.

There were 21,900 additional jobs created in the area between 2014 and 2016 but 20,000 of them were in lower paid sectors of tourism, retail, care and administration. The local economy has a high proportion of seasonal employment, low wages and high levels of part-time employment, so is less suited to in-work training, and many employers report lack of time and money as particular barriers to upskilling their workforce.

The Humber area has an above average proportion of large businesses employing 250+ employees, representing 0.7% of the total business stock compared to the national average of 0.4%. Larger businesses tend to be in manufacturing, retail, and business administration and support services.

The sector composition of the employment base is quite narrow, with 50.3% of employment concentrated across the four sectors of manufacturing, health, retail, and education, considerably higher than the national average of 39.8%.

Total jobs in the Humber LEP area (which also includes North and North East Lincolnshire) increased by 20,000 over the two year period 2012-2014, which represents an increase of 5.0% and is slightly above the employment growth rates reported regionally and nationally.

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<sup>5</sup> [York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP Strategic Economic Plan](#)



Half of these additional jobs have been created in the East Riding of Yorkshire. However, employability continues to be an issue in the Humber with employers wanting to see an improvement in the preparedness, communication and customer service skills of job applicants.

The changing sector profile, with fewer workers required in traditional sectors is highlighting issues with the employability of older workers. Progress has been mixed regarding the skills profile of the Humber working age population over the period 2012-2015. The proportion of working age residents qualified to NVQ Level 4+ has increased sharply above the national average in the East Riding of Yorkshire, but the number of people educated to this level in Hull has fallen during this time, which has resulted in an overall net increase of 7.0% in the LEP area compared to the national average of 9.1%. Similarly, the number of working age residents with no qualifications decreased considerably in both Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire, falling by 24.05 and 24.3% respectively.

Youth unemployment is a persistent issue and 18-24 year olds account for around a third of all unemployment in the area and numbers have more than doubled over the past 10 years. An increasing proportion of young people are in receipt of out of work benefits, and the Humber now has the second highest incidence of youth unemployment of all 39 LEP areas in England. There is also concern that major new investors in the area may attract level 3 and 4 workers from existing SMEs/multi-nationals in the Humber or from further afield in the region. The level of replacement demand in some sectors as older workers retire is ten times greater than the jobs being created through economic growth.

The Leeds City Region is home to the largest manufacturing base in the UK with distinct assets in automotive, bio-science, turbine technology, advanced textiles and medical devices. It is the largest regional financial and professional services centre and has unique strengths in the application of digital technology ranging from healthcare to data analytics. These provide the City Region with competitive capability in globally significant markets that are likely to grow strongly in the future, but the challenge is to deliver a response that is resolutely focused on accelerating this position and unlocking productivity improvements, particularly through delivering the improvements needed in the mixture and levels of skills amongst young people and adults.

Compared with the UK average, a lower proportion of people in the City Region are in employment and the value of output that workers produce is also lower. Whilst productivity in the City Region is rising and is similar to most core city LEPs in the north and midlands, levels of productivity stand at just under 90% of the England average; moreover, they are growing more slowly than the average. The drivers of productivity - skills, research and development and innovation, enterprise and investment - are also improving, but not as fast as in other parts of the country.

## LEP priorities

The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) working in the review area presented the sector growth areas that underpin economic priorities, as set out below:

### York, North Yorkshire and East Riding

Sectors recognised in the Strategic Economic Plan<sup>6</sup> as important to the LEP area include:

- health and social care
- the visitor economy
- agriculture
- food manufacturing
- advanced manufacturing
- construction
- energy.

The area also has a specialism and high employment growth in scientific research and development, particularly in agri-foods, agri-technology, bio-science and bio-economy but despite these particular specialisms, the overall levels of business research and development in these areas is low and the proportion of businesses introducing new or improved products and services is the lowest of all 39 LEPs.

Increasingly the LEP's focus will be on trying to create well-paid jobs in high value sectors and have a local workforce with the level of qualifications that can fill these jobs, thereby increasing wage levels across the area.

The development of the Potash mine near Scarborough is a £2 billion investment that will create 1,000 direct jobs and an additional 2,000 jobs in the local supply chain in Whitby, Scarborough and the surrounding area. More than half of these jobs will require skills at level 3 upwards.

Over half the UK offshore power generation (12,000MW) will be provided by the Dogger Bank and Hornsea wind farms off the North Yorkshire Coast, being developed at a cost of £40 billion and set to create 2,000 jobs. These also provide the opportunity for regeneration and investment opportunity both to support the offshore operations and develop local supply chain businesses (Whitby is the nearest port to Dogger Bank and Bridlington is nearest to

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<sup>6</sup> [York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP Strategic Economic Plan](#)

the Hornsea Field). A new offshore wind service centre is already being built at Whitby Harbour.

## **Humber LEP**

The LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) 2014-2020<sup>7</sup> has the following ambition at its core: To maximise the potential offered by the Humber Estuary, leading the Humber to become a renowned national and international centre for renewable energy and an area whose economy is resilient and competitive. Detail is provided in the Employment and Skills Strategy<sup>8</sup>.

The LEP's main economic priority comes under the banner of the 'Energy Estuary', but there are also several other strategically important sectors:

- renewables and offshore wind infrastructure
- ports and logistics
- chemicals
- engineering and manufacturing
- creative and digital
- food and the visitor economy.

Growth in jobs in these key sectors is expected to be significant, with more than 10,000 additional jobs in the renewables and offshore wind sector alone and an additional 4,000 in ports and logistics.

The Strategic Economic Plan shows that the Humber's occupational profile is currently skewed towards lower skilled occupations though the situation improved between June 2013 and March 2016. Lower skilled occupations now account for more than 30% of all occupations across the LEP area compared with the national average of 24.6%.

The long-term challenge is to create a greater number of highly-skilled jobs across all the sectors in the Humber but particularly in the LEP priority sectors and have a local supply of workforce with the skills at the levels that these jobs require. The evidence suggests that over the last three years progress has been made: administrative and secretarial (+13.5%) and professional occupations (+10.3%) have reported the largest increases over 5 years to 2016 but overall the increase in highly-skilled occupations is 10% compared with a 4.5% increase in low-skilled occupations. However, an additional 38,000 highly-skilled jobs would need to be created in order to match the national average density of highly-skilled jobs.

## **Leeds City Region**

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<sup>7</sup> [The Humber LEP Strategic Economic Plan](#)

<sup>8</sup> [The Humber LEP Employment and Skills Strategy](#)

Within its Strategic Economic Plan<sup>9</sup> the LEP has identified a number of ‘Headline Initiatives’ that represent the developments that it wishes to see delivered over the next 10 years. These are regarded as the ‘game changers’ that will make real progress towards achieving the City Region’s vision. These are:

- implement coordinated and wide ranging action to radically increase innovation
- become a global digital centre with specialisms in data storage, analytics, digital health and technical skills
- boost business growth, productivity, exports and investment by linking businesses to support and funding, including through the LEP Growth Service, Skills Service and Trade and Investment programme
- deliver a ‘more jobs, better jobs’ programme to widen employment, skills, apprenticeships and progression opportunities, linked to goals for tackling issues around those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- devise and deliver a programme of action to increase high level skills and close the gap compared to the UK average
- targeted investments and innovation to make the City Region a leading centre for zero carbon energy
- make climate change adaptation and high quality green infrastructure integral to improving the City Region economy and its spatial priority areas
- deliver 30+ West Yorkshire Transport Fund schemes and make progress towards a single ‘metro style’ public transport network, connected to major national / northern schemes such as HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail
- develop and regenerate integrated spatial priority areas, supporting employment, quality environments and the building of 10,000-13,000 new homes per year
- develop an integrated flood risk reduction programme, incorporating flood defences, green infrastructure and resilient development.

The Strategic Economic Plan also identifies a priority for the LEP to ‘increase skill levels and employability significantly to meet future job demands and enable people from all communities to secure more and better jobs – closing the gap to reach the national average on higher level skills and progressing the City Region’s NEET-free ambition’.

The LEP’s labour market analysis<sup>10</sup> shows that the the gap between the proportion of the working age population with higher level skills (level 4 and above) in the City Region (31%) and the UK (36%) has grown between 2007 and 2014 while the number of people with no formal qualifications has fallen from 16 to 10% against the current Great Britain figure of

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<sup>9</sup> [Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Leeds City Region Labour Market Analysis](#)

8%. 17% of residents hold their highest qualification at level 1, GB figure is 15%. The fact that more than a quarter of the adult population have no, or only low level, qualifications is a significant concern for the City Region.

Despite the improvement in the proportion of residents with level 4 qualifications, the relative position of the area offers room for improvement as the City Region is ranked 25th out of 39 LEPs on this measure.

According to the labour market analysis, education and training achievements (which broadly equate to mainstream further education) do not appear to align with labour market demand in the same way. There are several subject areas in which achievements appear to be over-represented relative to job opportunities, most notably: arts, media and publishing and leisure, travel and tourism. There are also some areas under-represented in terms of achievements such as: business administration and law, engineering and manufacturing and retail and commercial enterprise.

The LEP's approach focuses on supporting those companies who genuinely want to grow, in any industry or sector but there is particular emphasis on a number of key sectors:

- innovative manufacturing
- financial and professional services
- health and life sciences
- low carbon and environmental industries
- digital and creative industries
- food and drink.

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

Feedback provided by LEP representatives, local authority representatives and employers consulted during the area review process included the following:

- the fact that rurality is seen as a barrier to accessing learning opportunities. This relates not only to travel to college issues, but delivery of apprenticeships in rural areas often comes up against transport issues for young people, especially when many of the opportunities are in the visitor economy where pay is low and hours 'unsociable' and not matched to public transport provision. Mention was made of previous projects that provided mopeds for young people to use to access work or training
- Distance learning was seen as ineffective for replacing classroom-based learning, so any plans to use distance learning to address rurality issues would need to offer an approach that included blended learning and access to remote technology. This is

particularly the case for learners aged 16-19 on level 1 and 2 provision rather than programmes where specific skills instruction needs to be provided

- concern that the forecast for growth in low skilled, low aspirational jobs is high and that high value jobs are not growing fast enough to meet the needs of the economy
- concern that the rate of retirement of skilled workers is outpacing the upskilling of the remaining workforce and that this will lead to skills shortages
- the higher than average levels of unemployment in urban locations across the area, particularly Hull
- the high level of seasonal, low skilled employment, particularly in the coastal areas of North Yorkshire
- the mismatch between what young people choose to study and the jobs available in the area, particularly identified as an issue in Leeds City Region
- whilst the gap between proportion of residents with a level 4 in North Yorkshire and the national average is falling, the proportion of Hull residents with a level 4 is 15 percentage points below UK average, which is a significant concern
- the need to take into consideration the recommendation from the West Yorkshire Area Review<sup>11</sup> in relation to Craven College and the findings of the Greater Lincolnshire area review<sup>12</sup> covering the Humber 'south bank', both of which border this review area
- complicated travel to learn and travel to work patterns within the area covered by the review and extending into the surrounding areas, including distances travelled and limited public transport.

Feedback also identified a number of strategic opportunities and challenges linked to apprenticeships:

- the change in the apprenticeships funding methodology presents challenges for colleges
- the lack of large employers within the region is a challenge and there is limited take up of apprenticeships by micro-business. This means that colleges may struggle to provide a viable offer and it will be essential to ensure that any future apprenticeship delivery structures are financially sustainable and allow progression to and from traditional full-time technical and vocational curriculum and higher education

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<sup>11</sup> [West Yorkshire Area Review](#) The report includes a recommendation: Shipley College is to progress towards a three-way merger of Shipley College, the Keighley Campus of Leeds City College and Craven College (located in Skipton) to form a single Aire Valley College. This is subject to the extraction of the Keighley College campus from Leeds City College being agreed subject to due diligence and financing. The inclusion of Craven College is also subject to the outcomes of the York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Area Review and the other options explored by the Craven College board, during that area review in autumn 2016.

<sup>12</sup> The [Greater Lincolnshire Area Review](#) took place in parallel with this area review and the outcomes will need to be considered in the context of potential impact on colleges and learner flows around the border areas.

- the current lack of higher level and degree apprenticeship standards in the LEP priority areas is a significant challenge to developing the local economy through apprenticeships
- the introduction of the levy in 2017 will provide new opportunities. Large employers and public sector organisations will have additional resource to spend on apprenticeships and may identify higher apprenticeships as a good vehicle for the professional development of existing and new staff.

In parallel to the area review discussions, Scarborough was designated as one of the first Opportunity Areas. The aim of Opportunity Areas is to build young people's knowledge and skills and provide them with the best advice and opportunities, including working with organisations such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, the Confederation of British Industry, the Federation of Small Businesses and the National Citizen Service. Opportunity areas will see local partnerships formed with early years providers, schools, colleges, universities, businesses, charities and local authorities to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Opportunity Areas will be given prioritised access to a wider support package helping young people from nursery right through to starting work. Scarborough will also benefit from successful bids for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, which will help raise aspirations for disadvantaged children through summer schools, organising school visits and providing academic mentoring. The Department for Education will target its programmes to ensure children get the best start in the early years, to build teaching and leadership capacity in schools, to increase access to university, to strengthen technical pathways for young people and work with employers to improve young people's access to the right advice and experiences.

There is a long-running debate on the need to coordinate 16+ provision across Scarborough. A local authority organised 'Skills Summit' took place in Scarborough on 14 October 2015 and the challenges posed at that event including concerns that:

- current arrangements were not well-equipped to provide the skills needed by the growing specialist local economy
- the decline in the age 16-18 cohort has led to diversification by colleges into new subject areas and this has created duplication of curriculum
- the new employer-led university technical college needs to be more closely aligned with the local strategic offer
- some provision delivered by non-Scarborough-based organisations lacked local ownership and accountability and this is seen as a barrier to true local partnership working
- a concern about the quality of some provision in the area

- there is a need for more independent information, advice and guidance for young people on the education and employment options and future opportunities available to them.

Feedback from the district councils included in the review area made the following points on college delivery:

- there are long travel to learn distances in rural areas
- there is good and outstanding quality of post-16 provision across the area, including apprenticeships and through to degree level, but there are also some areas of duplication in curriculum that need to be addressed
- in Selby, there are clear progression routes to a full range of post-16 provision
- there is strong collaboration between councils and colleges and all the councils felt that colleges are responsive to economic and employer needs
- parents and young people lack an understanding of apprenticeship routes and the progression opportunities they offer to young people
- the colleges' apprenticeship offer, particularly at higher levels, is currently limited

The district councils gave their views on issues in their areas that they felt were key to the economic future of their areas:

- the need to consider developing a single 16+ tertiary model in Scarborough to deliver a more coherent and less competitive FE offer across the district that meets current and emerging job opportunities
- the need to consider the development of a single Aire Valley college that would exploit opportunities across the area and ensure stability of smaller FE institutions
- insufficient construction skills provision in Scarborough to enable local people to access the jobs emerging, and the need for more and better quality engineering and motor vehicle training
- the gap in advanced manufacturing provision and the need for more technical education provision in Selby district
- Harrogate has insufficient higher education provision to encourage local young people to study or live in Harrogate, resulting in a declining age 18-30 cohort able to meet the needs of the labour market.

Other stakeholders consulted drew attention to:

- the current strong breadth and quality of provision in colleges across the area
- the good extent of collaborative working between the FE colleges
- lack of independent and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG), particularly on technical and vocational routes as an alternative to academic routes and higher level opportunities relating to the visitor economy



- lack of clear progression pathways for vocational routes and in particular for learners with special educational needs and disabilities
- due to rural isolation and travel issues, there is a limited vocational offer available in the upper Dales/Swaledale area and particularly a lack of higher level hospitality and tourism provision
- transport issues across North Yorkshire. The use of outreach centres and peripatetic tutors has been suggested as a solution to reduce isolation of learners
- the opportunity for an increase in higher education provision delivered in FE colleges and the scope for growth in higher-level apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships and for more partnership work with local universities.

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](#).

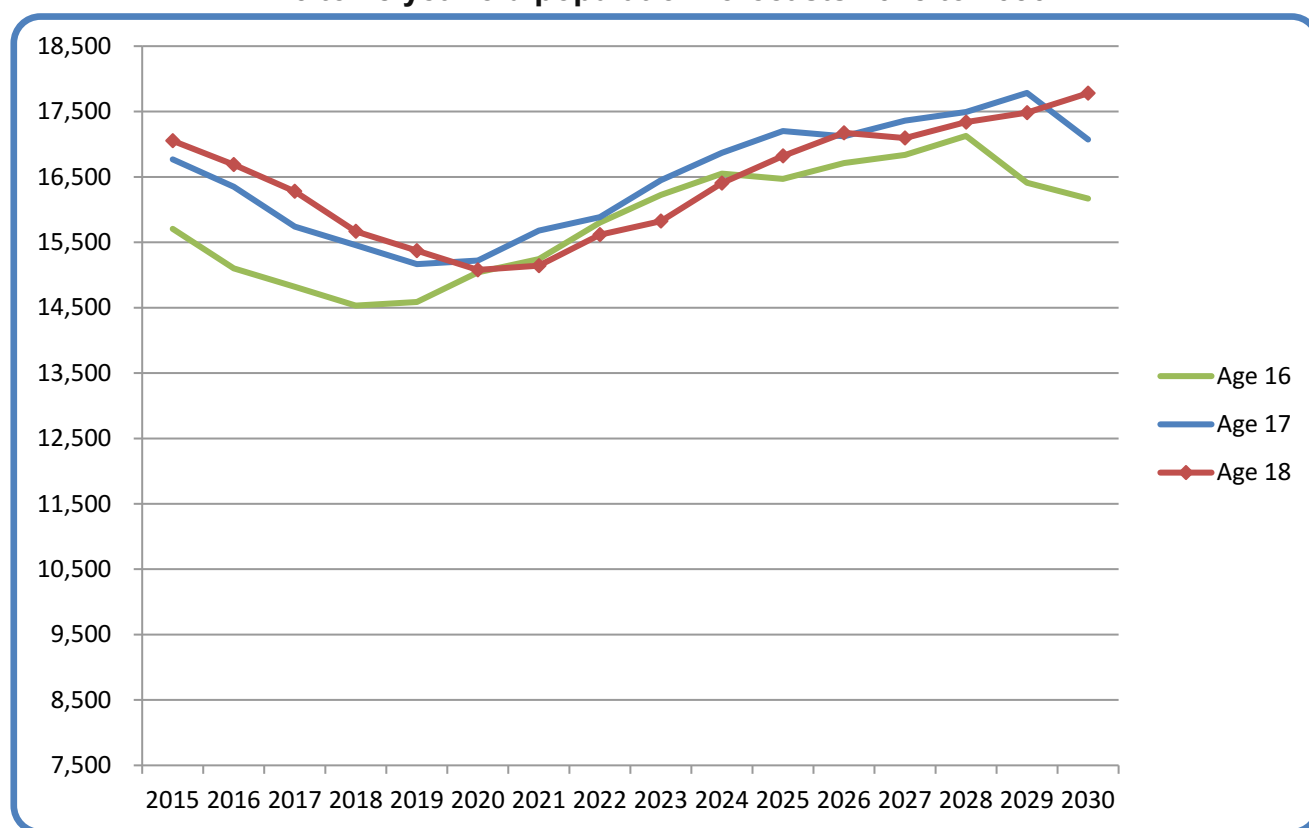
The colleges taking part in the review took primary responsibility for ensuring that their staff and union representatives had an opportunity to provide input throughout the review, which the steering group took into account. The Sixth Form College Commissioner held meetings with staff union representatives prior to steering group meetings 2, 3 and 4 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 York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull there were 49,527 young people aged 16 to 18 in 2016<sup>13</sup>. This population will fall to 45,341 by 2020 before rising back up to 50,489 by 2025. The following chart shows the expected change in the number of young people in the review area:

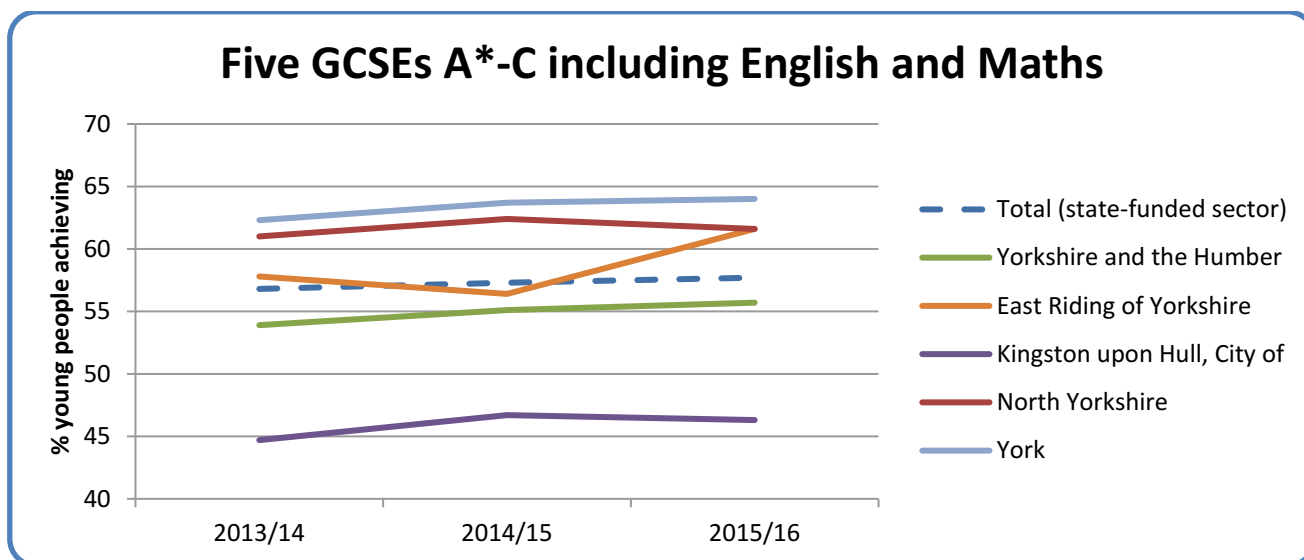
**16 to 18 year old population forecasts 2015 to 2030**



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

## Performance of schools at Key Stage 4

The recent trend in GCSE pass rates of 5 or more GCSEs at grade A\*-C including English and maths, for 16 year old school pupils completing year 11 across the 4 local authorities is illustrated overleaf<sup>14</sup>.



The percentage of young people achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grade A\*-C including English and maths at the end of key stage 4 in 2015 to 2016<sup>15</sup> was 55.7% across the four local authorities. This compares to a national rate of 57.7%. The graph highlights the variability across the 4 local authority areas, with York and North Yorkshire consistently above the national average, East Riding recovering well in 2015/16 to be well above the average, Yorkshire and the Humber remaining below the average and Hull showing a declining picture and remaining significantly below the national average.

## 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 are high quality and financially resilient colleges in each area of England. Schools with sixth-forms have the opportunity to request to opt in to a review and can participate if the local steering group agrees. None of the schools with sixth-forms in the area asked to participate.

<sup>14</sup> School Key Stage 4 results – see data annex. Local authority and total (state-funded sector) figures covering achievements in state-funded schools only.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

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 49 funded schools with sixth-forms in the review area including 31 local authority maintained, 17 academies and a newly opened university technical college in Scarborough. There are no free schools or studio schools in the review area<sup>16</sup>. 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 decreased by 527 in the three years to 2016 to 2017, with 10,889 young people funded in a mainstream sixth-form setting in 2016 to 2017<sup>17</sup>. 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 26 school sixth-forms (including local authority maintained and academies but excluding special schools) that were funded below that figure in 2016 to 2017, representing 53% of all the schools with sixth-forms.

The majority of schools and academies with sixth-forms were graded by Ofsted as good or better; a third are graded outstanding and about half have a grading of good for overall effectiveness.

## The further education and sixth-form colleges

Eleven colleges (2 specialist land based colleges, 3 sixth-form colleges and 6 general further education colleges) participated in this review:

- Askham Bryan College (specialist land based college)
- Bishop Burton College (specialist land based college)
- Craven College<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding.

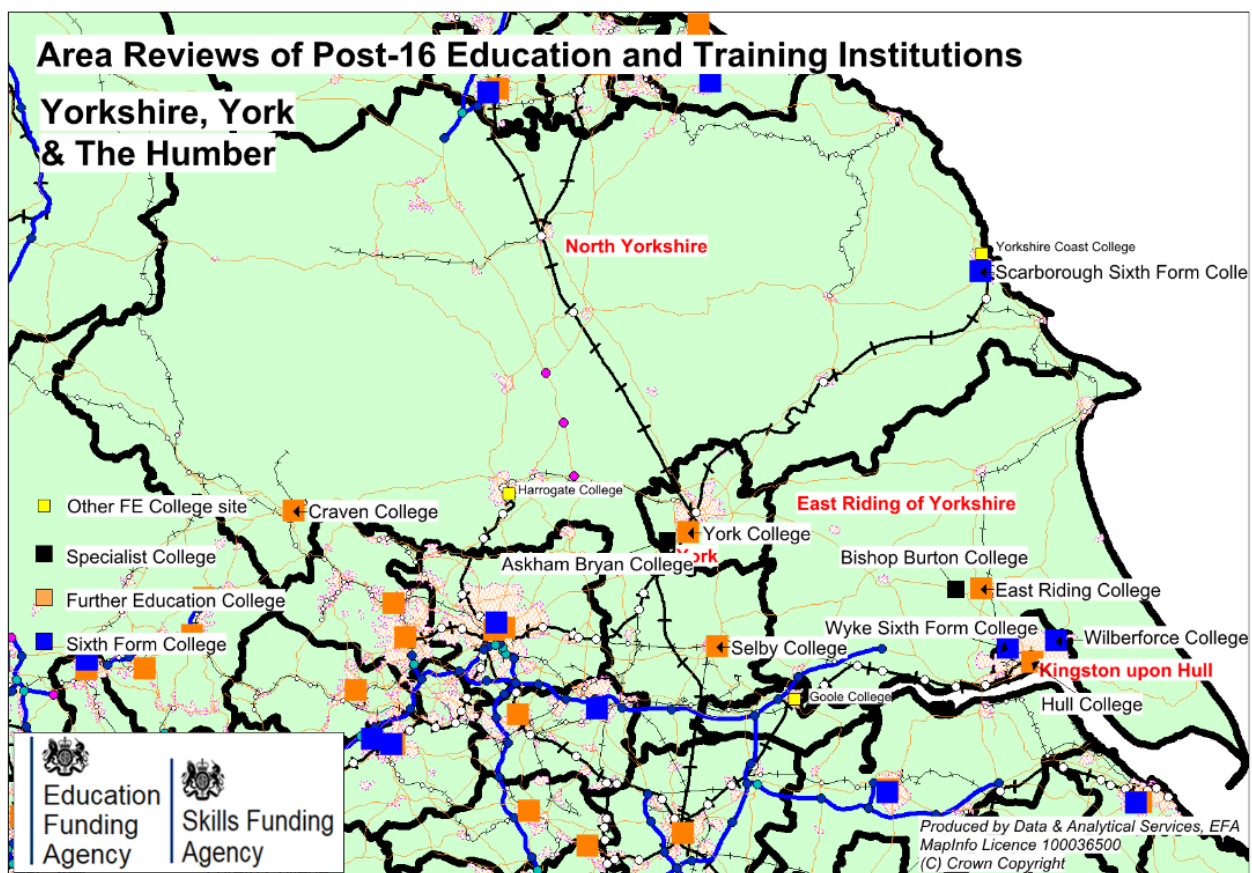
<sup>17</sup> EFA allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding.

<sup>18</sup> The [West Yorkshire Area Review](#) concluded in July 2016 and the published report includes recommendations for both Shipley College and Leeds City College that referenced Craven College:

- Leeds City College to remain as a stand-alone institution focusing on the education and skills needs of Leeds. Leeds City College will also have a role to play in enabling action on the recommendation for Shipley College (below) as that recommendation requires Leeds City College to release its Keighley campus to Shipley College and Craven College, supporting their merger. The release of the Keighley campus will be subject to due diligence and financing.
- Shipley College is to progress towards a three-way merger of Shipley College, the Keighley Campus of Leeds City College and Craven College (located in Skipton) to form a single Aire Valley College. This is subject to the extraction of the Keighley College campus from Leeds City College being agreed following due diligence and financing. The inclusion of Craven College in this

- East Riding College
- Hull College Group (including Hull College, Harrogate College and Goole College)<sup>19</sup>
- Scarborough Sixth Form College
- Scarborough TEC (formerly Yorkshire Coast College and part of the Grimsby Institute Group)<sup>20</sup>
- Selby College
- Wilberforce Sixth Form College
- Wyke Sixth Form College
- York College.

The location of these colleges is shown on the map below:



merger is also subject to the outcomes of the York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Area Review and the other options explored by the Craven College board during that area review in autumn 2016

<sup>19</sup> Hull College, Harrogate College and Goole College are all part of the Hull College Group and the group markets and delivers apprenticeship provision under the brand name HCUK Training.

<sup>20</sup> Yorkshire Coast College was re-branded as Scarborough TEC during the area review and is part of the Grimsby Institute Group. The other institutions within the group were included within the Greater Lincolnshire review.

Part of the area review process included a visit to each college by specialist further education and sixth-form college advisers who report to their 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 has informed the evidence base to the steering group for this review.

## **The current offer in the colleges**

The majority of the colleges in the review area (including the 3 sixth-form colleges) have students on A level programmes, the exceptions being the 2 specialist land based colleges, the colleges in the Hull College Group and Scarborough TEC.

For 16 to 18 year olds the most popular subject areas for students in the 2014 to 2015 academic year were:

- health, public services and care
- agriculture, horticulture and animal care
- engineering and manufacturing technology
- leisure, travel and tourism
- arts, media and publishing.

All of the general further education colleges in the area also enrolled 16 to 18 year old students on courses in:

- retail and commercial enterprise
- language, literature and culture (very small numbers)
- preparation for life and work
- business, administration and law.

Scarborough and Wyke Sixth Form Colleges offer a range of AS and A level subjects alongside some BTECs and GCSEs. Wilberforce Sixth Form College offers a wider range of vocational qualifications from entry to level 3, alongside its academic provision. The most popular sector subject areas are:

- arts, media and publishing
- science and mathematics
- health, public service and care.

While all of the colleges deliver maths, many have recognised the need to improve delivery, utilising a wider range of delivery methods to increase learner engagement and improve achievement rates.

The colleges have demonstrated their awareness of employer and economic priorities and there is clear alignment between planned provision and employer need. In many cases provision is already aligned to emerging inward investment opportunities, including potash, renewables, agri-tech, construction and, particularly, engineering. Colleges are working closely with major employers already investing in the area, as well as emerging inward investors, and many colleges have adapted their provision or introduced new provision in response to employers' new or changing demands.

## 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 <sup>21</sup>	EFA allocations (2016 to 17) <sup>22</sup>	SFA allocations (2016 to 17) <sup>23</sup>	Total college income (2014 to 2015) <sup>24</sup> (in 000s)
Askham Bryan College	Good (December 2011)	£16,280,866	£3,788,857	£30,537
Bishop Burton College	Good (January 2017)	£10,669,186	£1,898,675	£25,721
Craven College	Requires improvement (February 2016)	£7,075,843	£3,942,546	£17,028
East Riding College	Good (February 2016)	£5,406,336	£2,870,713	£14,679

21 Ofsted – see data annex: College inspection reports

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

23 SFA allocations – see data annex: Adult funding

24 College accounts academic year 2014 to 2015 data – see data annex: College accounts

<b>College</b>	<b>Most recent overall Ofsted grade<sup>21</sup></b>	<b>EFA allocations (2016 to 17)<sup>22</sup></b>	<b>SFA allocations (2016 to 17)<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>Total college income (2014 to 2015)<sup>24</sup> (in 000s)</b>
Hull College Group	Good (November 2015)	£15,208,671	£19,247,861	£59,841
Scarborough Sixth Form College	Good (September 2016)	£4,571,475	£62,724	£5,603
Selby College	Outstanding (November 2007)	£5,814,649	£2,248,890	£11,393
Wilberforce Sixth Form College	Good (April 2015)	£6,724,667	£54,588	£8,419
Wyke Sixth Form College	Good (October 2013)	£8,472,528	£14,486	£8,259
York College	Outstanding (December 2013)	£16,066,734	£3,335,304	£28,103
Grimsby Institute Group including Scarborough TEC <sup>25</sup>	Good (November 2013)	£16,167,405	£8,641,173	£49,374

Where a college was subject to a financial notice of concern or a financial notice to improve this was taken into account in the assessment of options for structural change in the review. Hull College Group is subject to a financial notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency in November 2016.

Overall, the condition of college buildings is good. Some colleges have higher average space per student than others but this does not necessarily indicate they are over-spaced. Each college has unique circumstances and constraints regarding estates. The area review

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<sup>25</sup> This information relates to the Grimsby Institute Group as a whole and not specifically to Scarborough TEC as this is not longer an independent college



has highlighted some instances where rationalisation or further investment might be considered during the implementation phase.

## **Higher education in further education<sup>26</sup>**

Progression of young people into higher education across York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull has been variable. The progression rate for young people who reached age 18 between 2005-2009 and participated in higher education was: 39.3% in North Yorkshire, 38.5% in East Riding, 36.5% in York and just 18.6% in Hull. While most of the areas compare well to the national progression rate of 32.6% for the United Kingdom overall for the same period, it is very clear that far fewer Hull residents are participating in higher education.

The universities of York, Hull and York St John are located within the review area and offer the majority of higher education in the area. However, there are also universities within daily travelling distances in Leeds, Bradford and Teesside.

The colleges within scope for the review had a total of 1,900 HE places in 2013 to 2014 funded directly and through partnership arrangements.

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

In 2016 to 2017, the EFA funded 845 post-16 places<sup>27</sup> across the four local authority areas in colleges, special schools and specialist post-16 institutions. Collectively the colleges delivered 382 of these funded places. The colleges delivering the highest numbers of funded places are: York College (98 places), Craven College (80 places), Askham Bryan College (55 places), East Riding College (29 places) and Hull College (23 places).

During the review, local authorities outlined a potentially significant increase in future numbers of students aged 16-19 with SEND (special education needs and disabilities) and noted that the percentage of EFA funded high needs places allocated in York and North Yorkshire is around twice as high as it is in East Riding and Hull. They advised that in East Riding there was a need to grow suitable provision for high needs learners, particularly for learners with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and autistic spectrum learners. Hull City Council expressed an ambition to limit the numbers of high needs learners whose

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<sup>26</sup> HEFCE POLAR 3– see data annex: Higher education progression

<sup>27</sup> EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding: High needs

education is provided by out-of-area specialist colleges. Conversations on these needs are ongoing.

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

## **Apprenticeships and apprenticeship providers**

In 2014 to 2015, colleges included in this review delivered 2,230 apprenticeships<sup>28</sup>. Other providers within the same area delivered 17,530 apprenticeships, of which 6,600 were with the British Army<sup>29</sup>.

Overall, the most popular framework areas delivered are: health, public services and care; retail and commercial enterprises; business administration and law; and engineering and manufacturing.

In some cases, colleges sub-contract some of their apprenticeship delivery to other providers, some of which are based outside the review area. This pattern may change in 2017, with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy<sup>30</sup> and the changes to the apprenticeship funding, including the opportunity for sub-contractors to bid for direct funding contracts.

## **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 strategic importance of the industry environmentally to food and water security in the future is set out. The land based and agri-tech industries have an ageing workforce and an increasing need for workers who can apply scientific and technological skills in a land based environment. In addition, while agriculture and land based engineering have relatively small provider bases compared to their significance to the industries they serve, there may be risk with loss of provision in some areas.

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28 2,040 apprenticeship starts plus those delivered at the Yorkshire Coast College (YCC). YCC starts are included in those for the Grimsby Institute Group and it is not reliable to assign apprenticeship starts at campus level.

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

30 'Apprenticeship levy and how it will work' on gov.uk

Nationally, apprenticeships in the land based sector have been slow to grow and there is a low rate of progression to level 4 and above amongst students who go into employment in the sector after completing a level 2 or level 3 programme.

Askham Bryan and Bishop Burton colleges are both land based colleges with a main campus within the review area and additional provision elsewhere. In addition, about 12% of students at Craven College are on agriculture, horticulture and animal care provision.

Askham Bryan College works closely with the local LEPs and is aligning its objectives and curriculum offer to both York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull LEP and Leeds City Region LEP, delivering FE or HE qualifications in agriculture, horticulture, countryside management, ecosystems services, environmental conservation, arboriculture, forestry, floristry, farm business management, rural enterprise management, animal science, zoo conservation, veterinary nursing and equine science. In addition it also has some small areas of general further education provision which have been specifically designed to serve the rural communities in which it operates and, through an extensive transport network, enables upwards of 1,500 learners to travel to the college's various sites. There is also a significant residential offer at both its Newton Rigg and York sites.

Bishop Burton College has aligned its curriculum to LEP priorities in agri-tech, agri-foods, sustainable agricultural production, renewable energy and services to business. The college has a 450 hectare mixed enterprise farm (dairy, beef, sheep, pigs and arable) which supports farming and environmental studies and the college also has an extensive applied research programme, a Centre for Agricultural Innovation, an Equine Centre of Vocational Excellence and an Animal Management Centre. In addition to its traditional land-based curriculum at FE and HE levels, the college is a nationally significant Centre of Excellence for Sport and has recently opened specialist centres for STEM subjects and alternative energy study. Provision for the unemployed is developed in conjunction with the local Jobcentre and apprenticeships funding has grown by approximately 20% a year between 2013 and 2016.

Craven College offers land based provision, including apprenticeships, in: land based studies, horticulture, countryside management and environmental conservation. It also offers degree level conservation and countryside management awards. The college does not have its own farm but offers students access to sheep, dairy and arable farms, estates and national parks and leisure facilities through extensive and well-established employer links.

## 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 that provision to the needs of individuals and employers.

## The key areas for change

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

- to increase the number of individuals with qualifications at levels that will enable them to secure and retain employment and enable progression
- to increase the number with high-level skills and qualifications and encourage graduates and those with higher level skills to live and work in the area
- to champion progression opportunities in skills shortage sectors including manufacturing, engineering and health & social care, including to replace older workers reaching retirement
- to ensure opportunities for inward investment are maximised by employers having access to people with the right level of skills particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM)
- to address rural access and inclusion issues ensuring that all learners have access to high quality learning environments and progression routes regardless of where they live
- a recognition that more needs to be done to increase the volume of apprenticeships being delivered by FE colleges as well as the breadth of higher and degree level apprenticeships
- the issues around low attainment and low rates of progression to higher levels for learners in Hull, together with the lack of coherence in the local offer
- the need for a coordinated post-16 offer in Scarborough that will provide good outcomes and progression routes for learners as well as addressing employer needs.

## 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 (mergers or federations) to improve financial viability, address quality issues, and retain a good choice of subjects and options for students. This was considered as an option by Craven College, Shipley College and the sixth-form colleges and discussions also involved colleges outside of the review area
- the potential for collaboration to reduce costs and to share services. Craven College in particular explored the opportunity to work with the Craven Educational Trust as it expands to become a multi-academy trust. This is also something that Bishop Burton College and East Riding College will explore as part of their collaborative working
- the case for remaining stand-alone where a college could demonstrate long-term financial sustainability. This was the preferred solution for Askham Bryan College, Bishop Burton College, East Riding College, Hull College, Selby College, Wilberforce Sixth Form College, Wyke Sixth Form College and York College
- conversion to an academy. This option is available 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 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. Scarborough Sixth Form College were interested in exploring this as an option.

# 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 any proposals, overall levels of provision for high needs students must 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 effective and 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 F<sup>31</sup> (revised March 2016).

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<sup>31</sup> [Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions: updated guidance on area reviews Annex E, Pages 49-53](#)

## Recommendations agreed by the steering group

14 recommendations were agreed by the steering group at the meeting in February 2017. These were:

- Askham Bryan College to remain as a stand-alone institution.
- Bishop Burton College to remain as a stand-alone institution.
- Craven College to progress towards a three way merger of Craven College, Shipley College and the Keighley Campus of Leeds City College to create a single 'Aire Valley College' which will share services with an expanded Craven Educational Trust (a multi-academy trust). This is subject to the transfer of Keighley College campus from Leeds City College on a financially feasible and acceptable basis. If this is not possible Craven College to remain a stand-alone institution working with Craven Educational Trust and to explore shared services with this multi-academy trust as it expands.
- East Riding College to remain as a stand-alone institution.
- Hull College Group to remain as a stand-alone institution under a 'fresh start' arrangement to deliver financial recovery to sustain a high quality further education offer aligned to priority skills requirements and current and future employment needs. This will include the input of appropriate professional turnaround expertise, refreshed and refocused governance and leadership to deliver financial stability, an agreed recovery plan, and a strategic review to continue to protect provision for Goole, Harrogate and Hull.
- Scarborough Sixth Form College to establish a formal Concordat with Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) to develop and implement an ambitious educational plan for Scarborough to raise learner attainment, improve progression opportunities, and deliver local education and skills needs. As a second phase the college will further explore with Grimsby Institute Group the prospect for establishing an integrated tertiary provider for Scarborough. At the same time, the college may also explore options for academy status.
- Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) to establish a formal Concordat with Scarborough Sixth Form College to develop and implement an ambitious educational plan for Scarborough to raise learner attainment, improve progression opportunities, and deliver local education and skills needs. As a second phase, the Grimsby Institute Group will further explore with Scarborough Sixth Form College the prospect for establishing an integrated tertiary provider for Scarborough.
- Selby College to remain as a stand-alone institution.
- Wilberforce Sixth Form College and Wyke Sixth Form College to establish a formal federated structure with Franklin Sixth Form College and John Leggott Sixth Form College to drive up quality, sustain and improve the curriculum offer, and introduce a range of shared services by July 2017. As independent institutions, the sixth-form colleges will continue to review, through the Federation, further options for closer



collaboration and structural change. Both institutions to collaborate with the general further education colleges and schools in the Hull area to ensure that a wide and sustainable offer is available to students and employers locally.

- York College to remain as a stand-alone institution.
- The York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Higher Apprenticeships group established under the area review to continue and develop a regional approach to increasing provision of higher apprenticeships through reviewing progression routes from level 3 into level 4 and beyond, supporting industry to create new apprenticeship standards that meet economic priorities, developing appropriate skills amongst the sector's workforce, and considering a joint approach to end-point assessment. The group to consider expansion to include Higher Education Institute membership.
- The joint local authority and LEP data group to undertake further work to establish the scope of rural and isolation issues in further education. LEPs and local authorities to invest in infrastructure and broadband to improve connectivity and LEPs, local authorities and providers to explore sources of funding for an 'access to skills' transport fund.
- The Hull working group established under the area review to continue as a post-16 leadership group delivering key activities in support of a 'Hull offer' – a city-wide curriculum strategy that links curriculum planning, progression routes and delivery to the local economy, aligned to the LEP skills strategy.
- To continue progress made towards a more integrated and sustainable tertiary offer for Scarborough by implementing the Concordat between Scarborough Sixth Form College and Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) , aligning it with LEP and Opportunity Area programme priorities, building collaboration with other post-16 providers, and monitoring implementation locally through the Opportunity Area and Scarborough Borough Council.

Each of the college options is now outlined in more detail.

## **Askham Bryan College**

Askham Bryan College to remain as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, over 2,000 employers are involved in curriculum development at the college, offering work experience placements and apprenticeship opportunities that address LEP priorities and meet the needs of employers in the land-based sector, including agriculture, food manufacturing, agri-foods, agri-technology, bio-science and bio-economy
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college meets 3 of the 4 financial benchmarks and, although it does not currently meet the operating surplus benchmark, it forecasts to deliver improving operating surpluses after servicing debt

repayments. A strategic review of the college's 5 year strategy is currently underway to ensure its continued sustainability

- in respect of quality of provision, the college was judged to continue to be good in all aspects at their last Ofsted inspection in March 2017. The college was judged as outstanding in Ofsted Residential Care Standards inspections in both January 2011 and March 2013. The college considers its provision to be good in all aspects and aims to have a number of outstanding areas, including apprenticeships by the time of its next inspection
- the college curriculum focuses on specialist provision including: agriculture, horticulture, countryside management, ecosystems services, environmental conservation, arboriculture, forestry, floristry, farm business management, rural enterprise management, animal science, zoo conservation, veterinary nursing, equine science and adventure sport and has some small areas of general further education provision which have been specifically designed to serve the rural communities in which it operates. The college serves catchment areas in the Leeds City Region, Vale of York, Yorkshire Dales, North York Moors, Teesside, Tyneside and Cumbria and has developed an extensive bus network system that has enabled upwards of 1,500 learners to travel to the college's various sites. There is a significant residential offer at its Newton Rigg and York sites.

## **Bishop Burton College**

Bishop Burton College to remain as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college has aligned its strategic objectives and curriculum to York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP and Humber LEP priorities in agri-tech, sustainable agricultural production, renewable energy and services to business. Provision for the unemployed is developed in conjunction with the local Jobcentre and apprenticeships funding has grown by approximately 20% a year between 2013 and 2016. The college established a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with East Riding College in 2016 to create pathways from foundation to degree level, with both further education and higher education work-based routes available for learners to progress into technical and professional careers
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college consistently delivers a financial surplus each year supported by strong cost control, particularly of staffing and annual surpluses regularly exceed the area based review benchmark. The college currently falls short of the solvency and debt benchmarks, however the strong forecast performance leads to the forecast achievement of all benchmarks by 2019 to 2020. The MoU with East Riding College enables further exploration of shared services, federation or merger if necessary

- in respect of quality of provision, the college is rated by Ofsted as good. The college consistently delivers achievement rates above national averages across all its provision, but particularly for apprenticeships. As well as winning the British Quality Foundation UK Excellence Award for a second time in 2015 (the only college in the country to have done so) it is also a nationally significant Centre of Excellence for Sport and hosts the academies of Hull City Football Club and both of Hull's Rugby League clubs. Through the MoU with East Riding College, senior managers co-operate on a number of joint initiatives and projects to enhance the capacity for continuous quality improvement and learner progression. East Riding also consistently achieves success rates above national averages and both colleges are rated good by Ofsted. Joint working on apprenticeship expansion, particularly for higher apprenticeships, has commenced and arrangements for assessment of apprenticeships and establishing a joint venture company to drive growth are being explored
- the college's specialisms include land based provision. The college's 450 hectare mixed enterprise farm (dairy, beef, sheep, pigs and arable) supports farming and environmental studies and the college also has an extensive applied research programme, a Centre for Agricultural Innovation, an Equine Centre of Vocational Excellence and an Animal Management Centre. The college has also become a nationally significant Centre of Excellence for Sport and has recently opened both a specialist STEM centre and an Alternative Energy Study Centre.

## Craven College

Craven College to progress towards a three way merger of Craven College, Shipley College and the Keighley Campus of Leeds City College to create a single 'Aire Valley College' which will share services with an expanded Craven Educational Trust (a multi-academy trust). This is subject to the transfer of the Keighley College campus from Leeds City College on a financially feasible and acceptable basis. If this is not possible, Craven College will remain a stand-alone institution working with Craven Educational Trust and explore shared services with the multi-academy trust as it expands. This recommendation reflects the recommendations made previously in relation to Leeds City College and Shipley College in the West Yorkshire Area Review.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the Ofsted March 2016 report highlighted that Craven College engages well with employers and the local community and has developed provision that is well matched to local priorities and skills needs. The Aire Valley is a major employment corridor focused on high-tech companies and digital communications, and the combined college itself would be a major employer in Skipton, Keighley and Shipley. Close links with employer groups are already established as exemplified by the Industrial Centres of Excellence awards in aviation operations, art and design and land based at Craven College,

business and retail at Shipley College and engineering at the Keighley campus of Leeds College. The combined institution would continue to offer pathways into most of the LEPs' identified key sectors and would develop skills provision in response to growth in new technologies, particularly in computing, health, manufacturing and the creative industries

- with regard to financial sustainability, a combined institution forecasts rising year end cash balances and all financial benchmarks would be exceeded at the end of 2020. The inclusion of Keighley will be a complex transaction but it will eliminate future competition between the colleges. Craven College as an independent college also forecasts rising year end cash balances and would exceed all the area based review benchmarks at the end of 2020, but finances would not be as strong as within the combined college
- in respect of quality of provision, Shipley College was rated as good by Ofsted and continues to deliver success rates above national averages across most provision. Both Craven College and Leeds City College were rated as requires improvement in March 2016 and both colleges have developed a detailed action plan to improve delivery. Leeds City College were under a notice of concern for failure of minimum standards for apprenticeships, but this was lifted before the conclusion of the review. Shipley and Craven run successful apprenticeship programmes, specifically rated as outstanding at Craven College. As a stand-alone institution Craven College would still focus on improvement, but would not be able to benefit from the sharing of good practice and pooling of expertise that a combined institution would offer
- the merged college will offer specialisms in engineering, construction, land based, art and design, aviation operations, and catering, all linked to LEP and employer priorities. It would have a well-defined and coherent catchment area based on Craven and the Aire Valley (the Aviation Academy excepted, as this is based at the Leeds and Bradford International Airport).

## East Riding College

East Riding College to remain as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, curriculum is aligned to local skills priorities including engineering and manufacturing, food manufacturing, creative and digital and the visitor economy and the college has high positive destination rates and a strong reputation with the local community and employers. The college has responded quickly to national and regional priorities including increasing their apprenticeship income in 2015-2016 by 49%. The provision for learners with SEND and high needs is of high quality and the college anticipates growth in student numbers. Higher education expansion of 29% in the last 3 years includes higher participation from under-represented groups. The joint business development

activities and MoU with Bishop Burton College (previously mentioned) is aimed at delivering an improved training offer and better resource utilisation

- with regard to financial sustainability, whilst solvency and debt ratios are within benchmark, operating surplus is slightly below, reflecting recent strategic decisions on capital investments. Staff costs are slightly above, but improving towards the benchmark. Strong cash generation through to 2019/20 will support on-going capital investments to maintain a high quality estate and teaching and learning facilities. The MoU enables further exploration of shared services, federation or merger if necessary
- in respect of quality of provision, there are strong achievement and progression rates for further education, apprenticeships and higher education, and apprenticeship achievement rates have consistently improved over the past 3 years. The college has received good and outstanding grades in the last 3 Ofsted inspections and is currently rated as good. Higher education Quality Assurance Agency Reviews have given the highest assurance grades possible. The college is a Beacon College with very high levels of student, employer and parent satisfaction ratings
- the college's specialisms relate directly to LEPs' priorities in engineering and health and social care and they also deliver professional programmes and teacher education. Provision across all levels will continue to serve the rurally dispersed community with accessibility from isolated areas enabled through transport arrangements with Bishop Burton College. The college has a medical academy, an engineering partnership, a new mechatronics workshop in Bridlington and a renewable energy technology centre in Beverley.

## Hull College Group

Hull College Group to remain as a stand-alone institution under a 'fresh start' arrangement to deliver financial recovery to sustain a high quality further education offer aligned to priority skills requirements and current and future employment needs. This will include the input of appropriate professional turnaround expertise, refreshed and refocused governance and leadership to deliver financial stability, an agreed recovery plan, and a strategic review to continue to protect provision for Goole, Harrogate and Hull.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college has undertaken a significant review of its curriculum over the past 18 months to align provision with LEP and local authority priorities and to reflect the need for a focus on employability. In Hull this focuses on ports and logistics, engineering and renewables, digital media and the visitor economy. In Goole the focus is on the Humber LEP priorities of ports and logistics, energy, engineering and renewables and the local priority of health. In Harrogate the focus is on the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP priorities of the visitor economy, science, healthcare and medical as well as local priorities of computing and information services, creative and media, transport and storage,

construction, finance and business services. Provision in all geographical areas offers technical routes through further education and apprenticeships at levels 1 to 4 and higher education. In November 2015, Ofsted recognised that provision was 'exceptionally responsive to local and regional priorities'

- with regard to financial sustainability, Hull College has seen a significant deterioration in its financial health and was issued with a financial notice of concern by the Skills Funding Agency in November 2016. The college has recorded a large operating deficit for 2015/16 with a significant operating deficit also forecast for 2016/17. In particular, staff costs as a percentage of total income are high compared to sector norms and the current ratio isn't projected to meet benchmark until 2019/20. The college was referred to the Further Education Commissioner who made an intervention visit at the beginning of December 2016 and work is ongoing to address recommendations
- Hull College Group has identified the need to invest in improving its main campus at Queen's Gardens in Hull as a priority
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is rated as good by Ofsted. The college has been subject to assessments and inspections on its quality assurance systems through its Foundation Degree Awarding Powers (FDAP) application and HE Review, with recognition given of the robustness of quality frameworks
- the college's specialisms have been developed on each campus to address LEP and local priority sectors that offer clear progression routes into apprenticeships and higher education. New specialisms are being developed in emerging sectors including renewables and bio-engineering and progression pathways will be established. Higher education provision is focused on these areas of specialism and, following the successful application for FDAP, the college will begin delivery in September 2017. The college works with over 1,200 employers, with more in depth relationships with employers such as Siemens, where a Composite Training Centre has been jointly established to train 800 employees.

## Scarborough Sixth Form College

Scarborough Sixth Form College to establish a formal Concordat with Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) to develop and implement an ambitious educational plan for Scarborough to raise learner attainment, improve progression opportunities and deliver local education and skills needs. As a second phase the college will further explore with Grimsby Institute Group the prospect for establishing an integrated tertiary provider for Scarborough. At the same time, the college may also explore options for academy status.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college provision is aligned to a number of local priorities including the need to raise attainment and value-added levels and retain strong post-16 academic provision for the town. More coherent learning pathways to higher level skills are being developed in sectors relevant to

local economic growth including: construction, engineering, health and social care and the visitor economy. Emerging opportunities are brought by: the York Potash, GCHQ, local engineering companies, offshore energy, York Foundation Health Trust and planned population and visitor growth. The Concordat will seek to address these priorities, achieving greater focus on key skill needs and more coherent pathways through collaborative planning and working with Scarborough TEC

- with regard to financial sustainability, the college currently meets both the current ratio and borrowings benchmarks and forecasts to continue to achieve these. Whilst staff costs are slightly above 65%, the operating surplus is below benchmark and forecasting breakeven, with the college projecting a deficit in 2019/20. However, annual cash generation is strong enough to provide a good level of cash reserves. The Concordat will, at a minimum, not adversely affect their financial position, but the expectation is that it will bring net financial benefit, provide greater stability for planning and reduced business risk. The option to academise will need to meet the requirement to maintain or improve the financial health, not increase risk from competition and to not undermine the Concordat
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is rated as good by Ofsted and delivers high success rates and excellent outcomes for learners. The Concordat aims to improve learner choice, improve and co-ordinate information, advice and guidance between the institutions, and to develop relevant curriculum pathways and specialisations. Success will be measured by improvements in the quality of provision and better learner outcomes. These aims will need to be clarified, perhaps with attainment targets being set through the executive group overseeing the Concordat or the proposed implementation group
- the college's specialisms are being identified through the Concordat. Joint curriculum planning will commence, additional specialisms will be developed collaboratively, duplication will be removed and there will be a single prospectus. Work is underway to improve progression routes, enable and support learners to move between the two institutions, provide better IAG and increase and improve learner choice.

## **Scarborough TEC (formerly Yorkshire Coast College)**

Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) to establish a formal Concordat with Scarborough Sixth Form College to develop and implement an ambitious educational plan for Scarborough to raise learner attainment, improve progression opportunities, and deliver local education and skills needs. As a second phase, the Grimsby Institute Group will further explore with Scarborough Sixth Form College the prospect for establishing an integrated tertiary provider for Scarborough.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the Grimsby Institute Group uses local management information, other sources of data and direct engagement with learners and employers to develop and change the curriculum offer to respond to LEP and

local priorities including engineering, construction, health and social care and hospitality and catering. There is a focus across the group on learner progression and on growing level 4 provision, particularly in Scarborough. The group has already demonstrated its commitment to the investment in Scarborough TEC that will enable it to increase, broaden and improve the quality and achievement rates of its curriculum offer in line with the group's strategic plans and the Concordat

- with regard to financial sustainability, the Grimsby Institute Group meets all the financial benchmark indicators and has strong cash reserves. Although the financial information provided is for the whole group, following the merger with Yorkshire Coast College the group removed a deficit of approximately £2m that existed at Yorkshire Coast College in less than 18 months. The Concordat will, at a minimum, not adversely affect their financial position, but the expectation is that it will bring net financial benefit, provide greater stability for planning and reduced business risk.
- in respect of quality of provision the Grimsby Institute is currently rated as good by Ofsted. The Concordat aims to develop and implement a plan to raise learner attainment in Scarborough, improve and co-ordinate information, advice and guidance, improve progression opportunities, including between the institutions, and deliver provision to better meet local education and skills needs
- the specialisms in the group and for Scarborough TEC are hospitality and catering (Scarborough TEC has a long standing tradition of producing high calibre chefs who have gone on to gain national recognition), the arts (at further education and higher education levels), construction and motor vehicle. Technology is used to address rurality and learner isolation through cloud-based systems. Unification of group resources in infrastructure, connectivity, technology and learning management system ensure that rural centres are able to access the same class experience in real time.

## Selby College

Selby College to remain as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, Selby College is highly regarded by the district council for its responsiveness and role in economic development, meeting the needs of local people and employers alike. It has made changes in curriculum to match LEP priorities for age 16-19 provision and apprenticeships and has grown this in business administration and law, construction, computing and IT and science and maths. The college offers apprenticeships and higher education pathways to level 5. There are plans to: expand the construction higher education offer; review hospitality and catering provision to level 3 to ensure it meets local needs; harmonise higher education and higher apprenticeships; and facilitate progression from level 3 to level 4+ in engineering, business and management, computing and construction and from academic courses to higher level apprenticeships. There is projected to be a 14%



rise in age 16-18 year olds in Selby over the period to 2020/21 and significant house building surrounding the college, bringing families to the area. The college will also take over the running of the Goole Academy Sixth Form, having the potential to help provide a long term solution for high quality provision in Goole. The college is widening access to learners with high, moderate and low level learning difficulties and disabilities. The purchase of a private training provider business will increase the college's capacity to respond to local employers and take advantage of the apprenticeships levy and future growth sectors in the local authority area, including in construction and engineering

- with regard to financial sustainability, the college meets all the financial benchmarks apart from staff costs and this is forecast to improve towards benchmark by 2019/20. The college is in a strong financial position with sufficient resources to support its preferred option. The college's 5 year plan focuses on growth in provision that meets LEP and local employer needs, the continued reinvestment in the college estate and delivery of high quality provision
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is graded outstanding by Ofsted. The predominance of part time learners on higher education programmes reflects the responsiveness of the college to its local community and employers, offering provision specifically for those unable or unwilling to travel. Development and growth of the college will take place alongside plans to maintain high quality and support re-investment. In sponsoring a multi-academy trust (MAT), the college seeks to consolidate its position at the heart of education within the local community. Proposals will seek to drive up educational standards in Selby and Goole through the college managing the delivery of sixth-form provision at Goole Academy and the influence of the college through the MAT and potential Teaching School Alliance. This will improve access to high quality courses at level 3 in Goole and will also provide a springboard to rationalise and improve the offer for learners in Goole and the surrounding areas
- the college's specialisms include significant STEM provision and an A level offer. The Selby Educational Trust proposes to work with education providers from primary to tertiary to drive up standards and improve life chances for all ages. The college has applied to form a teaching school alliance involving secondary and primary schools across Selby and East Riding.

## Wilberforce and Wyke Sixth- Form Colleges

Wilberforce Sixth Form College and Wyke Sixth Form College to establish a formal federated structure with Franklin Sixth Form College and John Leggott Sixth Form College<sup>32</sup> to drive up quality, sustain and improve the curriculum offer, and introduce a range of shared services by July 2017. As independent institutions, the sixth-form colleges will continue to review, through the federation, further options for closer collaboration and structural change. Both institutions will collaborate with the general further education colleges and schools in the Hull area to ensure that a wide and sustainable offer is available to students and employers locally.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the federation plan maps directly to the Humber LEP area and travel to learn patterns with some overlap with northern parts of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP area and the institutions' collective offer maps to both LEP priorities and those of local authorities including for healthcare, IT, maths, engineering and science. The colleges have already undertaken a number of activities to meet current and future needs and the federation has the opportunity to bring additional value to learners and employers through shared resource and expertise and improved learner progression to higher level skills
- with regard to financial sustainability, Wilberforce Sixth Form College currently achieves the solvency and borrowing benchmarks and forecasts to meet the surplus benchmark by 2020, having moved from deficit to surplus. The exception is staff costs which will remain above benchmark. Cash and liquidity are strong and borrowings are relatively low. The Wyke Sixth Form College financial position is expected to improve by the end of the current financial year and then remain static through to 2020. Borrowings are relatively high, but the annual cash generation is sufficiently strong to service the debt repayments, and the college expects to continue to build cash reserves over the next few years. A legal structure will ensure a strong commitment to the long term sustainability of the federated model
- in respect of quality of provision, both Wilberforce and Wyke Sixth Form Colleges have a current Ofsted rating of good. The colleges regard the federation as an opportunity to focus efforts on improving already high levels of achievement through the leadership of the Academic Board that will be established. In addition, a well described quality improvement strategy will be created before the end of the current academic year
- the college's specialisms: the federation plan does not yet articulate the specialisms of each member of the federation nor what they will each bring to their collective

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<sup>32</sup> Information about both Franklin Sixth Form College and John Leggott Sixth Form College will be found in the [Greater Lincolnshire Area Review report](#)

'offer' and how these will add value to the federation in the future. However, an increased critical mass of students should enable the development of stronger specialisms across the federation.

## York College

York College to remain as a stand-alone institution.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college has strategic and operational plans designed to develop and grow provision to meet employer and individual need. The apprenticeship offer has expanded to include new provision in dental nursing, science, IT and customer service and there are plans to add property management, dental technician, dental practice manager and management. The college delivers level 4 apprenticeships in accounting and also continues to offer business administration, marketing, social media, human resources and healthcare at higher levels. It is introducing higher level apprenticeships in subjects such as: laboratory science, construction management, engineering and computing and initial teacher training. The college strategic plan shows an ambition to increase all-age students by 17% over the next 3 years in addition to the higher apprenticeship developments. The college is expanding HNC engineering, including an HND progression route, and developing a bridging course for level 3 construction apprenticeship transitioning into higher education. A number of new foundation degrees have also been launched
- with regard to financial sustainability, the college's financial health has consistently been strong and in 2016 it achieved all the financial benchmarks, except for staff costs. The forecast is for continuing strong solvency, reducing debt, improving staff costs but with a reduction in operating performance. The college anticipates income growth from apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships whilst income for 16-18s is projected to remain consistent despite the demographic decline, due to internal progression, retention and achievement strategies, increased work with NEET students and the continued provision of dedicated transport for students from West and North Yorkshire
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is rated as outstanding by Ofsted. The delivery of high quality provision is a key priority for the college and standards have improved or at least been maintained at a high level since 2007. The college is increasing investment, including staffing levels, as part of its strategy to improve delivery of English and maths
- the college's specialisms include IT, media and creative and a number of high quality specialist areas closely linked to local and regional need such as stone masonry (linked to York Minster), engineering (Nestlé and Siemens), construction and tourism. The college has also developed specialisms in accounting, food and drink, the health

sector, engineering and construction and is developing provision at higher levels in each of these sectors.

## Higher Level Apprenticeships

The York, North Yorkshire, East Riding and Hull Higher Apprenticeships Group, which was established under the area review, will continue and develop a regional approach to increasing provision of higher apprenticeships. They will review progression routes from level 3 into level 4 and beyond, support industry to create new apprenticeship standards that meet economic priorities, develop appropriate skills amongst the sector's workforce, and consider a joint approach to end-point assessment. The group will consider expanding membership to include higher education institutions.

- it was recognised that there is a complex market place for higher level and degree apprenticeships alongside the traditional HE offer and this is an area of significant change that has yet to fully engage colleges
- the group will aim to map the whole higher level skills offer for the review area and not just the higher level apprenticeships picture. This will ensure that any discussions and/or decisions made lead to the development of a coherent plan that serves local need.

## Rural Inclusion

The joint local authority and LEP data group to undertake further work to establish the scope of rural and isolation issues in further education. LEPs and local authorities to invest in infrastructure and broadband to improve connectivity and LEPs, local authorities and providers to explore sources of funding for an 'access to skills' transport fund.

- the group will consider the potential for the development of delivery models that include blended learning and remote technology to better support learners in accessing learning opportunities, both drawing on local good practice and seeking other good practice from colleges elsewhere
- there may be scope to improve co-ordination of transport arrangements through the local authority teams, though it was recognised that the system was complex.

## A Coherent Local Offer for Hull

The Hull working group established under the area review to continue as a post-16 leadership group delivering key activities in support of a 'Hull offer' – a city-wide curriculum strategy that links curriculum planning, progression routes and delivery to the local economy, aligned to the LEP skills strategy.

Members expressed an interest in continuing the strategic city-wide dialogue around post-16 provision begun during the area review. It was agreed that the purpose of the group would be broadened to focus on developing a post-16 strategy for the wider city, a 'Hull Offer', which will ensure that high quality city-wide pathways are available across all the key vocational sectors. The group, to be led by the local authority and including the Humber LEP, would have an expanded membership to include East Riding Council and the FE colleges and sixth-form colleges in Hull and East Riding. It would have the task of overseeing the delivery of the recommendations and outcomes identified through the area review and seek to set a clear strategy for post-16 provision in Hull and the surrounding areas aligned to the Humber LEP skills strategy.

The group will focus on the following areas:

- delivering the implementation plan agreed through the area based review process
- delivering the desired outcomes identified by Hull City Council, East Riding Council and the Humber LEP in their area review vision documents and other strategic plans
- the development of a 'Hull Offer', including pathways and progression routes
- promoting clear apprenticeship and higher level apprenticeship routes, particularly in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) areas
- identifying gaps in local provision and agreeing plans to fill them

- considering areas of duplication and specialism with the aim of improving the learners' experience and outcomes
- ensuring that there is a clear and continued link between curriculum planning and the local economy, to inform areas of specialisms and priorities for capital investment through the Humber LEP
- maintaining oversight of the quality of post-16 provision
- leading the careers education and IAG agenda
- monitoring post-16 destinations and progression into higher education.

Wherever possible, the group will aim to utilise existing partnership arrangements e.g. the East Riding 14-19 Partnership or Hull's Secondary Heads Group to deliver the agenda. A governance and communications plan supporting the work of the group would be devised in order to allow all interested stakeholders to keep abreast of the group's work and contribute where appropriate.

## Developing the offer for Scarborough

To continue progress made towards a more integrated and sustainable tertiary offer for Scarborough by implementing the Concordat between Scarborough Sixth Form College and Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC), aligning it with LEP and Opportunity Area programme priorities, building collaboration with other post-16 providers, and monitoring implementation locally through the Opportunity Area and Scarborough Borough Council.

The area review steering group established a working group to focus on the theme of provision in Scarborough. Membership comprised North Yorkshire County Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Scarborough SFC, Scarborough TEC and Scarborough University Technical College (UTC). It was agreed in principle by all that there should be an integrated single tertiary college for the town and its surrounding area; an institution that would operate within a wider context but with integrated leadership and governance. It is recognised however that this is not immediately achievable until greater confidence between the institutions is in place, particularly in relation to governance and quality, although important steps have already been made to:

- increase the shared understanding and analysis of demographic trends, current curriculum offers, employer and learner needs and institutional expertise
- establish local governance arrangements for Scarborough TEC (previously Yorkshire Coast College) which facilitate local collaborative opportunities
- develop an explicit Concordat between Grimsby Institute Group (on behalf of Scarborough TEC) and Scarborough Sixth Form College to enable and facilitate progress towards creating an integrated institution and a sustainable offer

- agree in the longer term to explore how Scarborough UTC and the Coventry University Scarborough could become signatories to the Concordat so that greater alignment of the offer made by all the post-16 institutions in Scarborough can be achieved.

## 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 each other, the LEPs, local authorities and the area 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 area review team is extremely grateful for the positive approach taken by all the local stakeholders involved in the review. North Yorkshire County Council asked that the 'joined-up' strategic leadership demonstrated throughout the review be maintained through the implementation stage and beyond to ensure members and stakeholders were able to stay up to date with information sharing and policy formation. Members agreed with this sentiment.

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

- the colleges have all worked to align their delivery with the priorities expressed by the LEPs and this will continue and be enhanced through collaborative working
- the focus of the Hull College 'fresh start' is on sustainable recovery and a further education offer aligned to priority skill requirements for current and future employment needs in the city
- the further development of the Hull working group into a post-16 leadership group, which links curriculum planning, learner progression and learning delivery to the Humber LEP skills strategy, offers real opportunities to address deprivation and develop the skills required by the economy of Hull City Region
- the Concordat that is now in place between Scarborough Sixth Form College and Scarborough TEC is an opportunity to align post-16 provision between the two institutions, develop a single prospectus, improve information, advice and guidance, quality of provision and learner progression and to reduce unhelpful competition. It also creates a route through which the institutions will be able to work together effectively and efficiently, which will hopefully lead, in time, to merger so that Scarborough will then have the single integrated tertiary college that has been a local aspiration for many years
- the further work planned by the local authority and LEPs to address rural and isolation issues in further education and their investment in infrastructure and broadband to improve connectivity should provide an opportunity for learners to access education without the need for extensive travel
- all of the colleges in the review area deliver higher level skills, at least at level 3, with strong level 4+ provision, either through academic or vocational routes (or both) and



through higher education. The work of the Higher Apprenticeships Group will develop a regional approach to increasing the provision at this level, developing progression routes to level 4 and beyond, and working with employers to develop new apprenticeship standards. This work will focus on meeting identified economic priorities and the skills needed by employers, particularly in areas of significant economic growth such as potash and renewables, that enable people to find and retain employment and increase their skills level

- the colleges are already developing new business models to enable them to engage levy paying employers so that they are ready for the apprenticeship reforms implemented from May 2017
- many of the colleges already have strong reputations in specialist curriculum areas and all will continue to focus on developing their curriculum, including improving learner progression as well as introducing new areas of provision in response to employer demand.

The three LEPs covering the review area will build on the dialogue begun during the review to enable colleges to align their curriculum planning with the economic and skills needs of the area, as articulated in LEP economic/skills plans. Through their respective LEP's Employment and Skills Panel/Board structures, they will seek evidence of how colleges' 'offer' to employers and learners addresses the skills needs of the area. This work will support plans for the use of devolved Adult Education Budgets to LEPs, Local or Combined Authorities.

## 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 what progress is being made in each area and each set of area review recommendations will be formally monitored at both local and national 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 timescales agreed. In this context, LEPs and local authorities are expected to retain their focus on driving changes, and assessing how the implementation of recommendations is contributing to local economic performance. The EFA and SFA, with oversight from the Further Education 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.



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