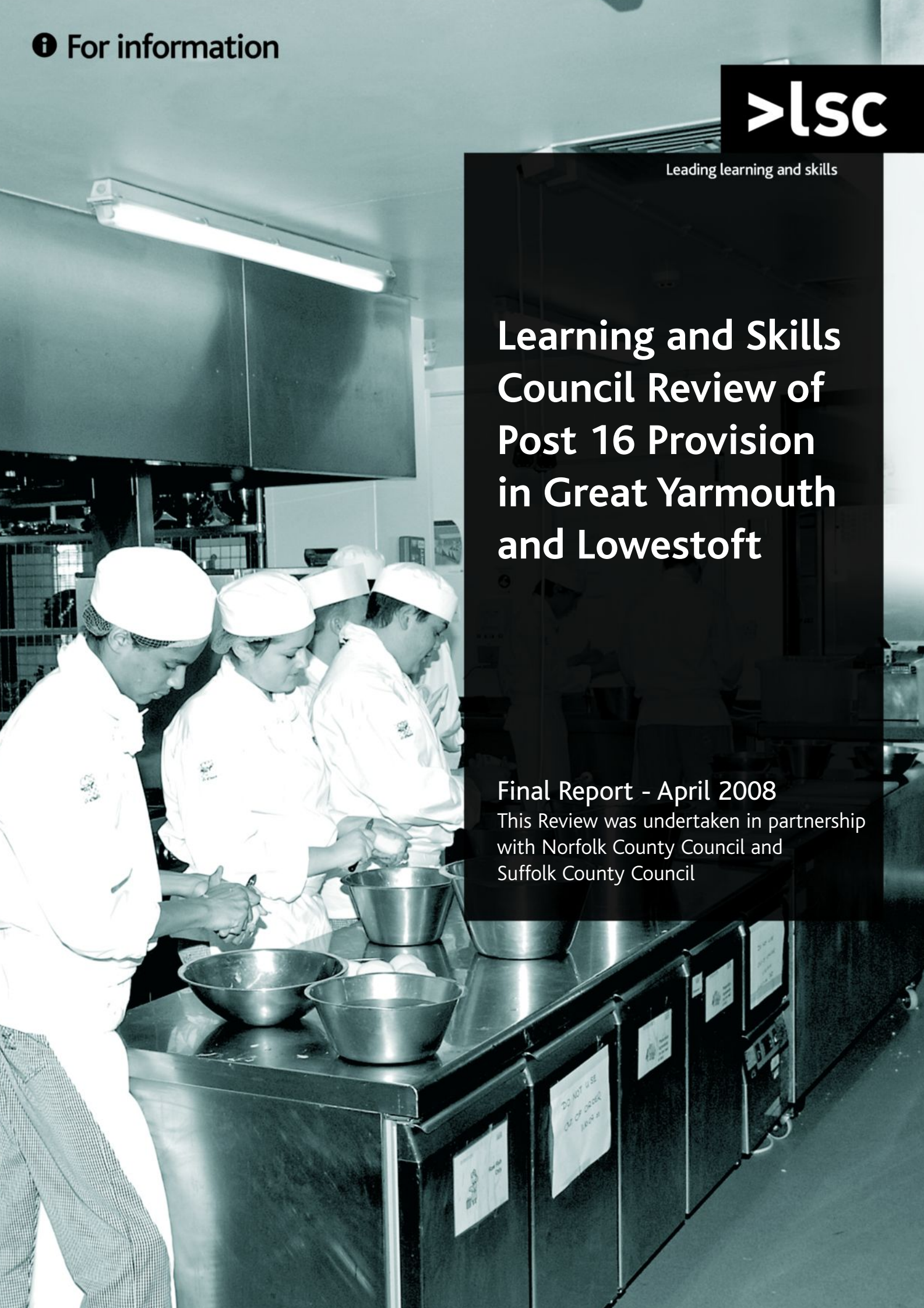


Learning and Skills Council Review of Post 16 Provision in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft

Final Report - April 2008

This Review was undertaken in partnership
with Norfolk County Council and
Suffolk County Council




Foreword

We believe that Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft have the potential for an exciting future; already businesses within the area are becoming known for their leadership in the energy sector, offshore industries and specialist engineering. We need the best possible learning and skills opportunities for local people to support the towns in realising their ambitions. We hope that this review will herald the beginning of a programme of development that will ensure a good range of high quality learning opportunities for all people living and working in the Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth area.

This Review has been a demonstration of the collaboration that we are advocating for the future: it was established and managed by a partnership of both Suffolk and Norfolk Learning and Skills Councils and the two County Councils; the aims, objectives and themes were the outcome of workshops with partners and local stakeholders; the recommendations were developed through discussion and consultation involving over 50 organisations. We would like to thank everyone for their support and positive involvement. We don't pretend that one review can address every aspect of provision but we do believe that if the recommendations outlined here are taken forward, the education and training sector will be well placed to contribute to a brighter future for the area.

Workshops in March 2008 debated and developed the recommendations, and also began to develop implementation plans for specific recommendations. The LSC have also already begun to implement recommendations, including launching a Post 16 Competition within Lowestoft.

We look forward to continuing to work in constructive partnership with you all.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Edward Libby' with a horizontal line underneath it. The second signature on the right is 'Johanna Finn'.

Edward Libby and Johanna Finn
LSC Regional Board Members from Norfolk and Suffolk
April 2008

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Glossary

ALL	Accreditation for Lifelong Learning
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network
BILD	British Institute of Learning Disabilities
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CoVE	Centre of Vocational Excellence
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
E2E	Entry to Employment
EBL	Education Business Link
EEDA	East of England Development Agency
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
IAG	Information, Advice and Guidance
IF	Increased Flexibility
liC	Investing in Communities
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
JAR	Joint Area Review
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
JSA	Jobseekers Allowance
L1	Level 1 Qualifications (including GCSE grades D to G; NVQ 1 and Foundation Diplomas)
L2	Level 2 Qualifications (including GCSE grades A* to C; NVQ 2; First and Intermediate Diplomas)
L3	Level 3 Qualifications (including A Levels grades A-E; NVQ 3; national and Advanced Diplomas)
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LDD	Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

LEAP	Learning and Enterprise Access Points
LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
LEP	Local Employment Partnership
LLDD	Learners with Learning Difficulties and / or Disabilities
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MAA	Multi Area Agreement
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
NET	Not in education or training
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NWES	Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services
OCN	Open College Network - an awarding body
OCR	Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations - an awarding body
PA	Personal Advisor
PATOSS	Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties
PCDL	Personal and Community Development Learning
PLASC	Pupil Level Annual School Census
PMLD	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOR	School Organisation Review
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
SSC	Sector Skills Council
TAP	Training Advice Point
UCS	University Campus Suffolk
VCS	Voluntary and Community Sector
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WBL	Work-based Learning
WEP	Waveney Economic Partnership
WFL	Wider Family Learning

Executive summary

All partners responsible for learning and skills must work together to ensure that we offer young people and adults appropriate high quality learning opportunities with effective tracking and support. This requires funders, schools, colleges, training providers, voluntary organisations, employers, and other partners to each recognise their role within the overall pattern of services and to make a commitment to working in partnership to develop more effective learning pathways for local people.

All organisations working with local people within Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft share a commitment to helping individuals achieve their potential. This Review involved these organisations in considering how we can further improve our provision of learning for local people. We considered whether the current arrangements enabled us to meet the needs of local communities, and whether they enable us to work effectively together. To reflect local priorities, we developed particular strands of work considering 16-19 year old learners, learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LLDD), adult learners and employers.

The Review was undertaken as a collaborative activity and this has become a major focus for the recommendations. It was commissioned and governed by a partnership of the Norfolk and Suffolk Learning and Skills Councils and both Local Authorities, schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, voluntary organisations, local councils and economic development agencies, councillors, businesses and employers, and other public sector agencies such as JobCentre Plus and Youth and Connexions were involved in developing the themes and the recommendations of the Review. Over 50 organisations were represented during the Review, with many people attending multiple workshops.

The recommendations are summarised below and further detail is available within the chapters of the report. This report is structured to follow the main themes that were considered during the review, however readers with an interest in a particular group of learners might need to look at several chapters; for instance, those with an interest in provision for adults need to consider the IAG and Transition as well as the Adults and Employers chapter.

In accordance with the spirit of the Review, draft recommendations were shared with partners and were challenged and improved through a series of workshops in March 2008. These final recommendations reflect the discussions at those workshops.

Review recommendations

Information, advice and guidance (IAG) and transition

Recommendation 1: Develop a single post 16 application process for each town (Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft).

Recommendation 2: Extend tracking and information processes to include all learners to age 19. Use these processes to develop individual support and transition plans for "at risk" and vulnerable learners, including the use of mentors to provide positive role models. Explore the potential for extending the approach successfully demonstrated for adults by the Suffolk Skills Coaching Pilot.

Recommendation 3: Agree and implement common protocols and processes for IAG for all learners, including those with LDD, that build upon processes outlined in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 4: Define and develop processes for relevant employer engagement in supporting learners through transition and progression.

Recommendation 5: Extend the single, on-line information, advice and guidance (IAG) database currently being developed for post 19 provision in Suffolk as part of the LEAP project to include adult and employer-facing provision in Great Yarmouth.

Collaboration and new approaches to deliver 14-19 reform

Recommendation 6: Build on the successes of the existing 14-19 partnerships, including the Increased Flexibility (IF) Programme, to reduce the future levels of NEET and NET. This includes continuing to broaden the range of curriculum and learning opportunities in KS3 and KS4 (including the Diploma entitlement), increasing the emphasis on basic skills for economic well-being, and the successful implementation of Recommendation 3 regarding IAG and support.

Recommendation 7: Great Yarmouth College and East Norfolk Sixth Form College should develop a single curriculum plan and a single application process, within the context of overarching sub-regional planning (see Recommendation 16).

Recommendation 8: Develop new 16-19 provision for Lowestoft to replace the existing School Sixth Form consortium.

Recommendation 8a: Ensure that the new post 16 provision in Lowestoft is inclusive for LLDD and includes appropriate facilities, provision, and access, including sensory and therapy support.

Provision for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LLDD)

Recommendation 9: Create a sub-regional project group to focus on more effective planning and joining up of local services for 14-25 learners with LDD. This project group should be formed within the framework outlined by Recommendations 16 and 17.

Recommendation 10: Review provision for learners with particular needs who would normally move onto part-time college placements e.g. learners with autistic spectrum disorder, to ensure that appropriate programmes based on individual learner needs are offered when they leave school.

Recommendation 11: Involve employers and voluntary organisations in developing the post 16 curriculum and work experience opportunities for LLDD.

Provision for adults and employers

Recommendation 12: Develop a single adult and employer-facing service to serve the sub-region, including the creation of a new Train to Gain consortium.

Recommendation 13: Establish a more substantial cross-membership of the skills and employment sub-groups of the Local Strategic Partnerships across the sub-region to raise the significance of skills and employment in the economic regeneration agenda of the sub-region and integrate interventions.

Recommendation 14: Continue to develop voluntary sector bidding consortia or umbrella organisations, based on the College in the Community model, to simplify the complex picture regarding agencies.

Recommendation 15: Meet the needs of both adults and employers by creating personalised/individualised skills and employability pathways for adults who are not in work and progression routes once they are in employment.

A sub-regional framework for collaboration

Recommendation 16: Develop a formal collaboration between the further education providers within the sub-region.

Recommendation 17: The partnership should implement a framework for the launch, management, and successful implementation of collaborative projects to address specific opportunities or issues.

1. The purpose and context of the Review

A review of post 16 education and training across Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft was launched in summer 2007 following the publication of a baseline study of primary and secondary data identifying current strengths and potential areas for improvement. This was the first time in recent years that a review of learning had been commissioned across the economic sub-region centred on the two towns. The Review of post 16 provision is part of the ongoing work of all those involved in funding or delivering learning to continue to improve the opportunities for current and future learners in the East of England.

1.1. Rationale for the Review

The following rationale was published in the LSC Briefing Paper at the beginning of the Review (June 2007):

"The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has a responsibility to ensure that all young people and adults have access to learning opportunities that meet their needs and equip them with the skills, knowledge and qualifications to be successful in life. The LSC also has a responsibility to ensure that the learning opportunities available are of a high quality to enable all learners to achieve to the best of their ability, and that provision represents good value for money. To achieve these outcomes there needs to be careful review of provision and responsive commissioning, especially where there are specific challenges and barriers for communities, as is the case in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

The two communities of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are each distinctive, but they share some common challenges and barriers to raising the levels of skill within their local populations and ensuring that individuals have the best opportunities to secure their own economic well-being. There are high levels of deprivation across the whole area, higher levels of unemployment in young people and adults in both communities than within Norfolk and Suffolk in general and both communities face specific challenges related to their coastal locations. It is for these reasons and to ensure that the LSC can make the best possible use of its available resources to support the communities and the regeneration of the whole area that a joint review of provision for the two neighbouring towns is planned.

The LSC is committed to supporting First East in their strategy for economic development within the area. We recognise the important contribution that skills can make to the overall economic development plan and believe that the review of education and training provision and subsequent capital investment opportunities will make an important contribution to the successful regeneration of the area.

The current capital investment programmes for further education (FE) infrastructure and schools (Building Schools for the Future (BSF)) and the establishment of University Campus Suffolk (UCS) programmes in both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft provide an important opportunity for new facilities to be developed in support of post-16 education. Given the LSC's responsibilities for ensuring sufficient high quality post-16 provision is available to learners, the review will enable us to ensure that the significant future investments provide the very best possible opportunities for learners. The potential for Colleges to specialise in areas of strength or important local industry sectors will also need to be considered as part of the overall investment strategy.

There is currently no shared plan between the neighbouring LSC areas to ensure the effective co-ordination of future capital investment and coherence of provision across the sub region. This situation also applies to the provision of work based learning. The review will provide an opportunity to achieve a greater level of co-ordination of planning across the sub region."

1.2. Aim and objectives of the Review

The aim and objectives of the review were developed in consultation with schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and voluntary organisations.

Implicit within the aim and the objectives is a desire for the Review to improve:

1. Processes - to develop and improve processes for knowledge-shared and collaboration, and to help generate a sustainability to processes that allows partnerships to take forward actions without reliance upon the LSC.

2. Outcomes - to focus upon specific actions and outcomes that will help improve provision for, uptake by and the success of learners within the area.

1.2.1. Aim of the Review

To establish a new and shared vision for learning and skills across the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft area that will build ambition, result in better opportunities and levels of achievement for all people in the area and support economic regeneration.

1.2.2. Objectives of the Review

1. To develop a shared strategy for tackling the challenges relating to increasing participation in learning and raising achievement levels in the area.
2. To ensure that curriculum planning is coherent across providers working in partnership and specialisms are complementary across institutions and align with area and regional priorities.
3. To develop a coherent post 16 offer that provides clear and integrated learning pathways across the area, offers increased opportunities, greater breadth and is responsive to the diverse needs of learners and employers.
4. To ensure the provision of comprehensive and easily accessible information about all the learning opportunities and pathways available across the area, supported by robust and current data.
5. To develop a strategy for future post 16 capital investment within the area, that is coherent across providers and supports the overall vision for post 14 learning.

2. Review process and methodology

This chapter outlines the process of the Review and the stakeholders involved. Workshops and meetings held specifically as part of the Review have been supported by feedback from organisations who have discussed the Review within their normal processes. In particular, there was ongoing iteration with options being developed as part of the School Organisation Review within Lowestoft, which was led by Suffolk County Council and ran in parallel to the Review.

2.1. Data collection and analysis

The LSC produced a detailed baseline study that outlined the current provision, opportunities and outcomes for learners within Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft (Version 2 published 18 September 2007). This is available on the LSC website: www.lsc.gov.uk/eastofengland

2.2. Governance of the Review

A Programme Board managed the review. The agreed terms of reference and the members of this Board are shown in Appendix One. The Board ensured that the contributions of the wider group of partners and stakeholders were sought at appropriate stages throughout the process.

VT Four S and EC Harris were appointed to support the Programme Board in undertaking the Review.

2.3. Conducting the Review

The Review was intended to develop iteratively, in partnership with stakeholders, in order to respond both to themes that emerged during the process and also to other initiatives (such as the Suffolk School Organisation Review). As the process has developed greater attention has been paid to four specific themes:

- Ensuring that transition between providers is effective, and that information, advice and guidance (IAG) provided to learners and local people is impartial, comprehensive and consistent.
- Ensuring that the institutional structures support effective collaboration that will improve choice, quality and progression routes for learners, including the links to the Suffolk School Organisation Review.
- Provision for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities (LLDD).
- Provision for adults and employers.

These themes have structured the report.

2.4. The principles behind the methodology

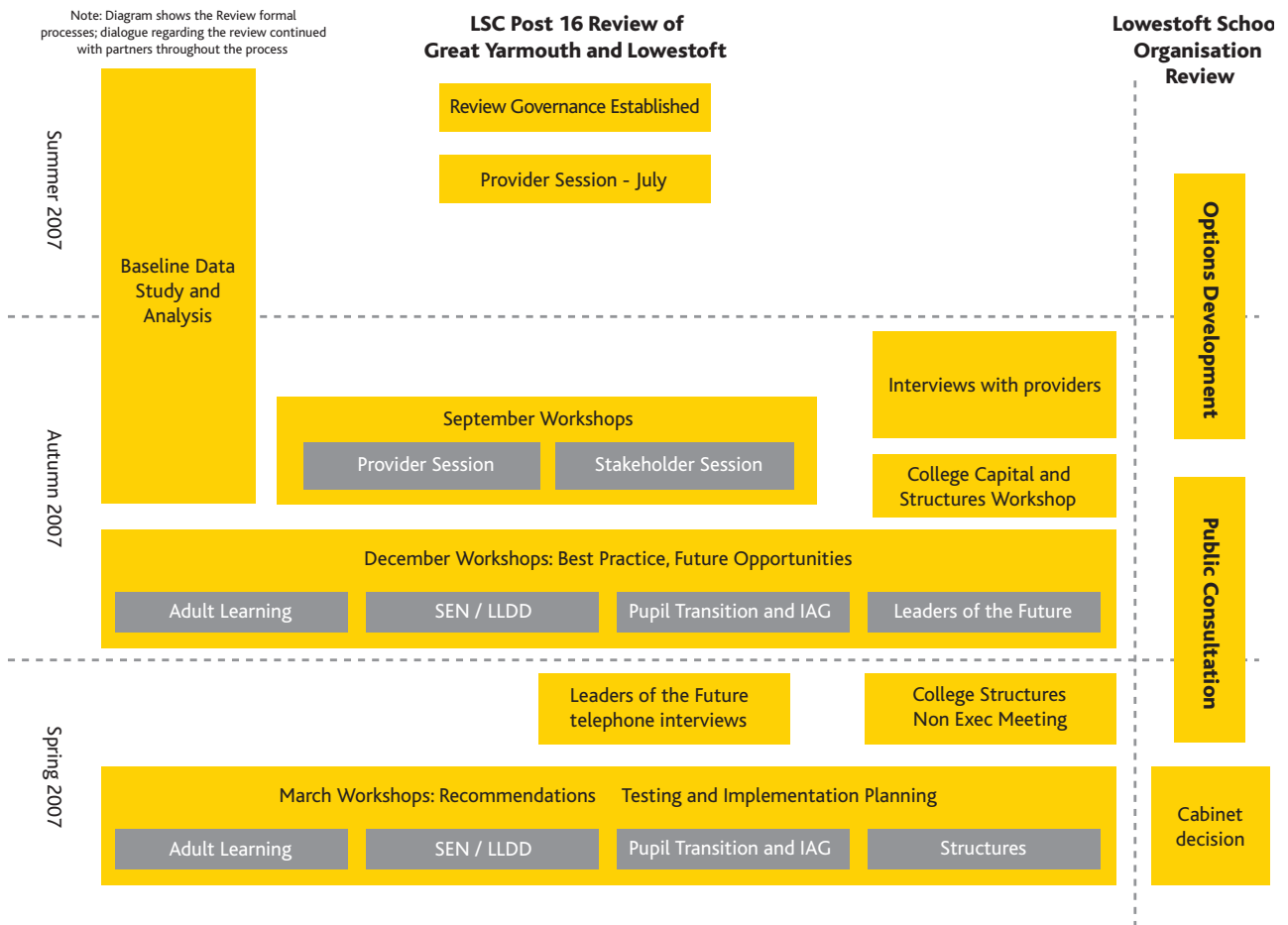
- Generate positive actions, not just talk and a 'report for the shelf'.
- Build local ownership of solutions.
- Build local capacity to implement the solutions, so generating sustainable processes.
- Balance between workshops and individual conversations.
- The Review is not a 'separate' exercise in a void - it affects, and is affected by, other initiatives and developments. The methodology must be flexible enough to evolve and reflect this.

2.5. Involving partners

The lead partners are committed to working together with local organisations to ensure that we offer learners an appropriate curriculum with effective tracking and support processes. This requires funding bodies, schools and colleges, voluntary organisations, employers and other partners to recognise their role within the overall jigsaw and to make a commitment to working in partnership to develop more effective pathways for local people and learners to follow.

Over 50 organisations participated in the Review, with nearly 200 different individuals contributing to events during the process. Partners included organisations which fund education and training; organisations which provide and deliver this education and training; organisations which support learners and local people and provide access to education; training or employment, employers and business community representatives; and organisations who promote economic development. This involvement provided a structure for the review themes - including a greater focus upon LLDD and adults as well as upon the overarching theme of collaboration. The list of partners who were involved in the Review is shown in Appendix Two.

Partners and local stakeholders were engaged through interviews and workshops and also proactively contributed to the review following discussions within their organisations or in other meetings. The recommendations have been developed from workshops and discussions with these partners.



All those involved in the Review gave freely of their time, exhibited a powerful commitment to improve the experience and achievement of the local community and expressed their desire for assertive action.

2.6. The geography of the Review

This Review focused upon the towns of Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Within Norfolk, it also took account of the LA structure and aligned with the East Area group of high schools. Within Suffolk, the Review aligned with the area being considered as part of the first phase of the School Organisation Review, which was the town itself and its immediate hinterland.

It was however recognised that no provision operates in isolation and that the FE providers in particular serve a wide physical area. It was also recognised that the impact on the wider area of any proposed outcomes of the review needed to be considered.

2.7. Next steps

Workshops in March 2008 debated and developed the recommendations that emerged from this Review. The workshops also began to develop specific implementation plans for recommendations. Many recommendations will require significant involvement from a variety of partners and Recommendation 17 provides a framework for these collaborative projects to be taken forward effectively. The LSC will distribute the implementation proposals, and will support the implementation of the recommendations in partnership with the LA's and working with local stakeholders and delivery partners. Recommendation 17 proposes the establishment of three Project Groups to take forward specific areas of work, and the LSC will work with the FE Colleges to instigate these Project Groups and develop their Project Brief. The LSC have begun to implement recommendations for which they have responsibility, including the launch of a Post 16 Competition within Lowestoft (Recommendations 8 and 8a).

3. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) and transition

All learners and potential learners need access to good quality, comprehensive and impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) which supports their personal development, achievement and career progression. Effective IAG helps individuals to make successful transitions into and through learning. There is strong evidence, for example, that young people who receive good quality IAG achieve more and are less likely to drop out or change courses than those who do not.

New DCSF Quality Standards (October 2007) set out expectations and state that good IAG services comprise:

- Information - accurate, up-to-date and objective information about personal and lifestyle issues, learning and career opportunities, progression routes, choices, where to find help and advice and how to get access to it.
- Advice - activities that help young people to gather, understand and interpret information and apply it to their own situation.
- Guidance - impartial guidance and specialist support to help young people understand themselves and their needs, confront barriers, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress.
- Support for curriculum development.

These standards, while developed by DCSF for young people, apply equally to all learners, irrespective of age. Providers are expected to ensure comprehensive, up to date information and impartial advice and guidance that is differentiated to meet the individual needs of their learners. This is how a universal service is tailored to provide focused and effective support to individuals. The following recommendations are designed to enable further progress to be made in implementing these standards across all provision.

Recommendation 1: Develop a single post 16 application process for each town (Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft).

To be successful this process requires all organisations to commit to its development. A single application process would become the vehicle for developing the impartial information, advice and guidance processes demanded by the quality standards. It requires tutors, careers advisors, and Connexions Personal Advisors to be aware of the range of opportunities available locally and to support learners in developing increasingly personalised progression routes.

A single application process has two inter-related advantages:

- It places the learners' choices of courses / provision at the centre of the process, rather than the institutions.
- It supports a holistic approach to IAG since it can incorporate programmes from WBL providers, E2E and voluntary organisations within a single process based on the Local Area Prospectus.

A common application process will require all organisations to commit to acting upon the information received in the application form and tailoring their timetables and provision (as far as possible) in partnership to ensure as many learners as possible have their choices met.

To support the process and ensure that all learners are included in it a shopping list or catalogue of all the opportunities, support services and projects that are available locally for post 16 learners is needed to supplement the Local Area Prospectus.

This could be the initial step towards a single application process across the economic sub-region to embrace the movement of learners that already occurs within it and between the two towns. In view of this it is important that the two single applications processes are developed collaboratively to enable later integration if this becomes appropriate. This recommendation focuses upon each town individually in recognition of the changes proposed for Lowestoft through Recommendation 8. The partnership and project structure advocated in Recommendations 16 and 17 could be the vehicle for developing an integrated process in future.

Recommendation 2: Extend tracking and information processes to include all learners to age 19. Use these processes to develop individual support and transition plans for “at risk” and vulnerable learners, including the use of mentors to provide positive role models. Explore the potential for extending the approach successfully demonstrated for adults by the Suffolk Skills Coaching Pilot.

It is recognised that we need to ensure a hierarchy of support for learners with different needs. This should begin with a consistent baseline of analysis for all learners as part of their Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This can then be swiftly escalated through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as appropriate. In addition, Section 140 of the Learning and Skills Act requires that the Connexions Service assess the educational and training needs of Year 11 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The process leads to a written assessment, or transition or learning plan which summarises the individual's educational and training needs and the provision required to meet them.

The Transitions Workshops identified strong support for the principles of a common entitlement for all learners at points of transition. This process of using the ILP and escalating as appropriate would ensure that all learners receive information, advice and guidance appropriate to their needs and involve parents and carers where necessary. It would support transition and provide individual information on the learner to the receiving provider or employer.

Those learners who are identified as “at risk” of being categorised as NEET (not in education, employment or training) or as vulnerable by their schools, those from the pupil referral units (PRU's) or learners with LDD should be offered plans with a greater range of support and learning opportunities. There is good practice in transition planning for learners with LDD within the sub-region, particularly in terms of the balance between sharing information and maintaining confidentiality; this recommendation seeks to embed and standardise this for all learners. The objective is to build on the work of Connexions and encourage effective links with voluntary and community groups to give uniform access to mentoring opportunities for all learners with LDD in the sub region. Initially the target should be learner groups most at risk e.g. learners with LDD at Entry or Level 1 skill base, or transferring from a PRU who may need extended support into their post 16 provision.

The tracking processes that are in place for such plans should be extended to all students so that learners are supported through all transition points from 16-19 (25 for LLDD).

The Suffolk Skills Coaching pilot provides some interesting lessons. It was designed for adults, and sought to put the individual at the centre of the service and provide tailored mentoring and support, information,

advice and guidance on a range of issues and job brokerage. It sought to ensure that individuals were not assessed several times by different organisations. The pilot has demonstrated that the co-location of advice and guidance and JCP advisors has been vital in engaging with and supporting those adults who are the hardest to reach and often the most disadvantaged. The approach has overcome the traditional advice that has a focus on 'courses' rather than the wider purpose of skills development. The pilot has highlighted the importance of developing an 'information, advice and guidance plus' role; identifying and training advisors with sufficient skills and knowledge, who can act as mentors, which is essential in creating and maintaining an integrated learning, skills and employment pathway for an individual. It will also be a further step in developing local adult information, advice and guidance to point people in the right direction and provide them with the support they need to find and stay in work. These principles of integrated support and consistent learner-focused processes are at the centre of this recommendation.

The rationale for this aspect of the recommendation includes the following:

- There is a need for coordination between primary agencies, voluntary and commercial sectors, particularly as learners with increasingly complex needs grow into adulthood e.g. the need to provide continuity of therapy through transition phases.
- There is a need for consistent and early transition planning.
- Connexions support for learners in all-age special schools finishes at age 18 whereas adult services do not provide support until age 19, so there is a gap in provision.
- There is a need for a single point of contact / support source, especially through the transition phase.
- There is currently an inconsistent approach to mentoring across the sub-region.
- There are proven advantages to learners accessing a mentoring process.

Recommendation 3: Agree and implement common protocols and processes for IAG for all learners, including those with LDD, that build upon processes outlined in Recommendation 2.

Clear procedures need to exist for sharing information between organisations to identify current gaps in support, encourage consistency of provision, and facilitate benchmarking - which all lead to future improvements of service through appropriate support at the appropriate time and a balance between universal and targeted services.

Learners' experience of IAG varies within and between Norfolk and Suffolk. The development of a service with specific targets for defined groups has diminished the equality of provision experienced by all learners. There is good practice in some secondary schools, for learners in PRUs and those in special schools but this results from the strengths of individuals involved rather than from sustainable systems.

- Good practice needs to be shared and common protocols and practices for IAG, information exchange and tracking need to be agreed and consistently implemented across providers to support all learners regardless of ability, background or culture.
- Schools, colleges, Connexions and training providers need to be clear about the quality of IAG required and the variety of progression pathways and learning opportunities available locally. The implementation of consistent, impartial information, advice and guidance procedures needs to be supported by high quality Continuing Professional Development and sufficient resource to deliver an entitlement for all learners.

- Schools need to know the initial and any subsequent destinations of the 16-19 year old learners who leave them at the end of Year 11 or Year 12. Detailed information that supports learners' transition during this period needs to be shared between relevant institutions and organisations according to agreed protocols that will safeguard the learner. The development of robust data on student progression and tracking will lead to an increased level of understanding of progression post 16 and the development of appropriate intervention and support strategies for individual learners in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.
- Strategies need to be implemented that involve and inform parents/carers throughout the IAG process.

CASE STUDY

EmPower Meridian East

This provides an IAG focus for young people aged 15-18 who have a moderate learning difficulty, mental health issue or other needs where specialist support can make a difference. EmPower provides an individually designed programme for up to 16 weeks across a wide range of vocational areas e.g. job search / finding, work based literacy / numeracy skills, and college visit / employer / training provider support.

Recommendation 4: Define and develop processes for relevant employer engagement in supporting learners through transition and progression.

Employer engagement will play a central role in the development of the 14-19 curriculum and could be used effectively to support learners through transition. Practitioners at the Transitions Workshop gave examples of mentoring by business partners or older role models which has been effective in supporting transition and raising learners' aspirations, particularly those who have been identified as at risk of becoming categorised as NEET. Others provided evidence of how talks and presentations by providers and employers about the opportunities offered by vocational provision and work related learning motivated learners to achieve their targets in Year 11 and progress to further education and training at 16.

Good practice in strategies to engage employers successfully needs to be shared and developed further to improve transition. Involvement of the local business community in the Review suggests that there are links that could be developed further as employers are concerned to improve the level of skills of their local workforce and potential employees. This recommendation needs to be taken forward through the future commissioning of Education Business Link (EBL) programmes and in partnership with the EBL providers in the area. As a first step a task group will need to agree a clearly defined programme of action to improve employer support for transition.

Recommendation 5: Extend the single, on-line information, advice and guidance (IAG) database currently being developed for post-19 provision in Suffolk as part of the LEAP project to include adult and employer-facing provision in Great Yarmouth.

There are numerous organisations providing IAG for adults in the sub-region at present. There is insufficient clarity for learners and a lack of shared knowledge and practice between providers and support agencies.

University Campus Suffolk (UCS), together with LSC Suffolk, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and Suffolk County Council is in the process of developing Learning and Enterprise Access Points (LEAP), to ensure that further and higher education is accessible to as

many people as possible. All LEAP Centres will be IAG points but some will also include access to other services, such as the Learndirect National Learning Directory and some training delivery on the premises. This project will also provide web-based advice linked to Suffolk Training Advice Point (TAP) and there is potential for this to be extended to include Great Yarmouth and integrate the mapping work of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The rationale for this recommendation is that there is a need for a rationalisation of the complex picture of adult and employer-facing provision across Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft in order to aid learners, employers, providers and funding bodies. This would create a single, 'one-stop shop' across both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and enable a virtual co-location of services, providing an accessible, locally focused resource. It would also aid the simplification of structures, act as a first step in the development of an adult careers service, and improve knowledge-sharing, collaboration and networking opportunities for providers. It is important that there is a clear transition process for individuals from Connexions to the adult service.

4. Collaboration and new approaches to deliver 14-19 Reform

4.1. The national context

Post 16 education and training is embedded in the reforms of 14-19 education. These reforms intend to raise the participation of young people within learning and raise the skills and achievements of 16-19 year olds. Particular policies or themes of relevance include:

- **Raising the compulsory participation age** - the Education and Skills Bill (29th November 2007) will raise the education and training leaving age to 17 by 2013 and to 18 by 2015 as well as strengthening the provision and support available to young people and adults to meet the ambition set out in the Leitch Review of achieving world class skills by 2020. Local authorities will be required to promote young people's participation and to support them to find appropriate education and training opportunities, including Diplomas, work-based learning and apprenticeships.
- **Introducing an entitlement to 17 specialised lines of learning by 2013** - Diplomas in 17 broad lines of learning will be introduced in stages between September 2008 and September 2011. They are designed to encourage more young people to continue learning for longer and to gain the qualifications they need to progress into further and higher education or employment. The Diplomas are being offered by partnerships of schools, colleges and work-based learning providers supported by local employers and should provide progression routes to employment or higher education. By 2013 all 14-19 year old young people will have an entitlement to take them in their local area. The Diplomas may be taken at three levels which have been now been given equivalences by the DCSF:
 - The Foundation Diploma (Level 1) is equivalent to 5 GCSEs at grades D-G
 - The Intermediate Diploma (Level 2) is equal to 7 GCSEs at grades A*-C
 - The Advanced Diploma is the equivalent of 3.5 A levels at grades A*-E
- **Providing coherent progression pathways for learners through institutional collaboration** - The broadening of the curriculum entitlement requires schools, colleges, work-based learning providers and other organisations to work together. Government has introduced new policies to enable this collaboration within and between the school and college sectors, including federations, CoVEs (Centres of Vocational Excellence), schools companies, and 'trusts'. FE and HE institutions are being encouraged to sponsor Academies, or join 'trusts' with local schools and partners to improve the breadth and coherence of opportunities for learners, provide clear progression routes between schools and further learning, and enhance provision for gifted and talented learners. Institutional lines are becoming increasingly blurred, as illustrated through the Increased Flexibility programme and new 14-16 or 14-19 vocational / skills centres governed by partnership boards.
- **The September Guarantee** - From 2007 all local areas now offer a 'September Guarantee' to all students completing year 11. From September 2008 this will be extended to 17 year olds to give those who enrol on one year or short courses, or who leave learning at 16 further opportunities to engage in learning. The Guarantee is of an offer of a suitable place in learning, which will normally be of full-time education, an apprenticeship / programme-led apprenticeship or E2E. Offers must take account of the level of provision required by the young person, its location, occupational sector and learning method. The Guarantee is to improve post 16 participation rates and to reduce the

number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), by focusing on the most fragile point of transition to post-16 learning.

- **Increasing employer engagement to ensure 'skills for work'** - The 14-19 White Paper emphasises the importance of linking education and work:

"We made work-related learning a statutory requirement in the curriculum from September 2004... because we are determined that pupils of all abilities and talents will develop their employability skills and attitudes and their enterprise capability, and do so with employer input to their learning and in the environment of work"

14-19 Education and Skills (February 2005, paragraph 5.25).

- Capital investment within the FE estate - the three FE Colleges in the Review area have the opportunity to bid for LSC funding to renew and improve their facilities. This level of funding is a 'once in a generation' opportunity; the funding is however finite and time-limited. Effective investment in appropriate facilities would have clear benefits for learners. Access to this funding requires a clear learning vision and thorough analysis of the future learning needs of the locality.

This emphasis on collaboration has led to the development of local networks / partnerships, involving schools and colleges as a minimum. Successful partnerships are developing integrated visions and curriculum provision, and undertaking specific projects to address local priorities such as reducing exclusions, supporting LLDD and the gifted and talented as well as joint strategic planning to improve quality in all partner institutions. Local employers are now being incorporated in these partnerships, for support in developing the content of the new curriculum, ensuring that it is rooted in the workplace and to provide work placements as part of progression routes.

Throughout this review most respondents have championed the benefits to learners of increased collaboration. Many have shared their experiences of developing partnerships, including the barriers and challenges that are faced. The Review findings agree with the view of one contributor who said that "collaboration is vital to the future of the region."

4.2. Raising participation in learning

The following information was included in The Baseline Study (Version 2 - Published 18 September 2007) (note: data is from 2006).

In Great Yarmouth:

- Average participation in learning at ages 16 -18 (75%) compared to a Norfolk average of 75% and a national average of 77.3% for 2005/6.
- At age 16, 10.2% of young people were NEET compared to the Norfolk average of 7.3% Nelson ward in Great Yarmouth has the highest number of NEET young people in the county, and Great Yarmouth wards make up 3 of the top ten wards with the highest number of NEET in the county.
- 39.7% of young people achieve 5 A*-C including Maths and English at GCSE with wide variation between providers.
- A high A-Level point score which compares well to the national average.

In Lowestoft:

- Above average participation in learning at age 16-18 (72.4%), compared to the all Suffolk score of 71.1%, but this is still below the national average.
- The highest percentage of NEET (young people not in education, employment or training) at 11.6% against a Suffolk average of 8.3%.
- The lowest GCSE scores at 5 A*-C including Maths and English at 35.5% against a Suffolk average of 45.9%.
- A low A-Level point score per entry, compared to Suffolk and England.

4.2.1. Developing a coordinated approach to reducing the NEET and NET figures

Local support processes can be developed further around the needs of the individual, especially those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or those not in education and training (NET - those in jobs without training, usually low-skilled, low-paid employment). During the Review examples of young people who have multiple relationships with the public sector were identified. These may include schools / colleges, the health service, police and justice systems, the local authority and Connexions. Learners' individual circumstances present a variety of challenges that have an impact upon their ability to focus on learning or acquiring skills for employment. Some young people receive intensive support from voluntary organisations (which may be funded by the public sector, i.e. LSC or JCP), but these programmes are often time-restricted or have specific eligibility criteria. For young people, this variety of institutions can be confusing and repeated episodes of short-term support reduces their feeling of self-worth and importance; this in turn makes each intervention more difficult to initiate as it has to build up their confidence before addressing other issues.

There is a need to develop an integrated, multi-agency approach to supporting learners with their progression after compulsory age schooling (this links to recommendations above regarding IAG and transition). This needs to focus specifically upon groups of young people who are traditionally less likely to continue in learning, such as young parents and those with additional learning needs. There also needs to be a specific focus upon:

- Providing effective transition procedures and support agreed by all involved with the process across the area to reduce the increase in NEET/NET figures at 17 and 18.
- Providing tailored support and learning options for those who are in seasonal and/or low wage work (often within the NET figures).
- Providing individual programmes for learners classified as having LDD (see Recommendations 2 and 3).

A challenge raised during workshops was how to develop local funding and monitoring processes and indicators that promote 'doing the right thing' for young people. There was a perception that current emphasis upon success rates may for example encourage E2E providers to select students they believe will "stay the course" rather than selection solely on the potential benefit for the individual. Providers have been encouraged to vary the standard 22 week length of E2E programmes to suit individual circumstances. There needs to be similar consideration of alternative means to demonstrate success for these learners and the provision of support within the workplace would help to reduce the number of young people in the NEET group.

Recommendation 6: Build on the successes of the existing 14-19 partnerships, including the Increased Flexibility (IF) Programme, to reduce the future levels of NEET and NET. This includes continuing to broaden the range of curriculum and learning opportunities in KS3 and KS4 (including the Diploma entitlement), increasing the emphasis on basic skills for economic well-being; and the successful implementation of Recommendation 3 regarding IAG and support.

Those involved in delivering the 14-19 curriculum should be involved in strategic planning within and between partnerships to ensure that there is full entitlement to all Diploma lines of learning with integrated progression routes at all levels by 2013. This may involve joint Gateway applications across two or more partnerships supported by individual strategic planning within each partnership.

It will also require an understanding, following the pilot phase in 2008-9, of the extent to which the Diplomas will meet the needs of all students and the partnership planning for any additional and alternative provision that will be needed to supplement them, to ensure that all learners are provided with appropriate learning opportunities and progression routes. This may include further actions to broaden the curriculum at KS3 and / or KS4, potentially in partnership with employers and with voluntary organisations, to target particular groups of young people. This increased curriculum breadth must be coupled with a focus upon the basic skills needed for economic prosperity. These skills include maths and English, but also include employability skills such as working in teams, problem-solving and improving their own performance.

The development of quality assurance and improvement processes for collaborative provision will also be necessary and this will be supported by robust ICT systems across providers. Individual monitoring, support and recording of progress and achievement will need to be built on shared protocols and procedures involving a commitment from all involved in the partnership. Systems to support the joint responsibility for students are necessary if this collaborative provision is to improve the number of students who remain in education, employment or training.

4.3. Future structures

Existing 14-19 partnerships are county based. The baseline study indicated that relatively few learners cross county borders and those that do either move into the education system across the border at an earlier age, so follow on into the secondary system automatically, or might be moving from Lowestoft to access Level 3 provision at East Norfolk Sixth Form College. There are links between Lowestoft College and Great Yarmouth College at post 19 through higher education and the development of University Campus Suffolk.

Proposals for the future need to meet the objectives of the Review and to provide a 'direction of travel' enabling local capacity to manage change. The direction of travel must be based on collaboration. This is necessary to provide breadth of opportunity for those aged 14-19 and to ensure appropriate support as learners follow increasingly individual pathways. Effective collaboration requires structured, focused and effective partnership. It involves action to address specific issues, with clear accountability for projects and for outcomes and the trust to measure success and learn lessons. It means aligning schools, colleges, voluntary sector organisations, work-based learning providers and funding organisations to ensure synergy rather than duplication. It requires constant investment in sharing knowledge and best practice.

Partnership and collaboration was a theme in many of the Review discussions and was seen by many as vital to any future developments. This was particularly powerfully articulated by organisations which have had to

rely on bidding for funding to continue projects and by 'leaders of the future' who participated in the Review. This process led to the development of several principles regarding future structural models. These are shown in Box 1.

Box 1: Principles for future structures:

1. Recognise that we may desire different structures and / or partnerships for learners aged 14 - 19 and those aged 19+.
2. Generally speaking, learners on higher level courses are more willing to travel, so we need to maintain local provision for Entry to L2.
3. The 14-19 reforms require a collaborative curriculum and facility planning between institutions to provide maximum learner choice and highest quality.
4. Collaboration should be based on the principles of achieving curriculum complementarity (as opposed to competition) and of avoiding wasteful duplication of provision or facilities.
5. Existing institutions serve differing catchment areas - for instance the FE Colleges all reach beyond their respective towns. We need to be mindful of this when developing any new structures.
6. Structures for collaboration need to be enabling rather than restricting. This has several elements:
 - a. Institutions may be at different points in their own journeys and so be able to contribute more or less at different times.
 - b. 'Providers' (including schools, colleges, voluntary organisations etc) need to be able to be proactive in developing solutions for particular client groups (such as young parents) that may involve different partners.
 - c. Employers need to be able to access information quickly and effectively.

The collaborative arrangements mentioned above must consider the barriers to collaboration within the sub-region that respondents identified during the Review. Successful collaboration must:

- **Ensure appropriate pastoral support for learners on different sites:** There was a concern that collaborative provision, where students move between institutions, could prove a threat to vulnerable students and may actually increase the rate of drop-out and the numbers in the NEET category. All providers must agree protocols for providing pastoral support to all learners when they are on other sites. This must include processes for sharing information, for communicating with parents / carers / guardians, and maintaining overall awareness of the situation surrounding a vulnerable learner.
- **Ensure appropriate processes for maintaining academic rigour:** There was a strong consensus that collaboration must be founded on agreements with all partners regarding quality, with clear processes and accountability for review and improvement reflecting best practice. It was felt that this has not always been the case.
- **Ensure alignment of timetables:** Successful collaboration and the consequent greater choice for learners, requires agreement regarding timetable alignment between partners. Work-based learning providers and voluntary organisations involved with this age group need to be included in making these arrangements.
- **Travel and transport:** Travel within and between the two urban areas is difficult, especially by public transport. Effective timetabling to minimise movement and the provision of web-based / distance-learning materials where possible will help to minimise these challenges.

- **Accountability:** Schools and colleges are judged on their achievement and success rates as individual institutions. If they are now to develop collaborative relationships with genuine engagement from all partners, encouragement should be supported by local incentives even if the national measures for recognising this do not yet exist.
- **Be based on trust between organisations**

4.3.1. Great Yarmouth

There are six secondary schools for those aged 11-16 (from September 2008 following the completion of the Age of Transfer process), a PRU, a special school, a General FE College and Sixth Form College within the Great Yarmouth review area. The Excellence Cluster has developed from the Education Action Zone and includes five high schools in the town. Schools outside this group in the rural areas believe that the lines of learning (and Diploma applications) may be the vehicle for developing collaborative activity in the future. The Eastern Area Learning Board is expected to implement the majority of 14-19 reforms within the area, including ensuring collaborative provision and developing IAG. The Area Learning Board includes representatives from schools, colleges, work-based learning providers, Norfolk Learning Partnership, business, JCP, Connexions, the LSC and LA.

Collaboration between the secondary schools in Great Yarmouth at Key Stage 4 is based on the geographical proximity of schools north and south of the river and the ease of transferring students between them. There are some innovative partnerships developing to provide learning opportunities for Key Stage 4 learners, including Level 1 and 2 courses and projects such as Skills Force, and this is leading to the exploration of timetable alignment for the two schools involved. The development of joint curriculum initiatives across all schools in the area is hampered by the difficulties of travel and transferring students, particularly on tourist routes in the summer.

There is limited formal strategic planning or collaboration between Great Yarmouth College and East Norfolk Sixth Form College, with the result that there is the beginning of a potential trend towards duplication of provision. There is a perception that students have to select a college first and then their courses rather than the other way round.

Recommendation 7: Great Yarmouth College and East Norfolk Sixth Form College should develop a single curriculum plan and a single application process, within the context of overarching sub-regional planning (see Recommendation 16).

In developing the opportunities in Great Yarmouth there is a need to ensure that the 'system' is configured around learner choice rather than institutional patterns, in accordance with the principles set out in Box 1 (see above). There is limited collaboration between Great Yarmouth College and East Norfolk Sixth Form College which has an impact on the ability of learners to select a mix of academic and applied courses across the two institutions. There is an opportunity for greater collaboration to enable three developments:

- The ability to offer learners a greater range of tailored individual pathways through collaboration that combines academic and applied provision. This requires joint curriculum and facility planning, including linkages to the lines of learning, and would be signified by a single application process that emphasises courses rather than college.

- Closer collaboration would support the development of fast-tracking and a personalised curriculum for gifted and talented learners aged 14-16.
- The ability to drive up quality of provision in schools and colleges through peer review of provision, through shared planning for learner transition between institutions and through shared approaches to CPD for staff (including providing additional opportunities for staff to work across institutions, including with employers and voluntary organisations). This could extend to sharing 'back office' functions and closer collaboration on ICT infrastructure.

This recommendation is closely related to Recommendation 1, but extends that remit into collaboration regarding the future opportunities for learners. This recommendation is currently focused specifically Great Yarmouth because of the implications of Recommendation 8 regarding structures within Lowestoft. Following the post 16 competition outcome in Lowestoft it will be necessary to ensure effective overall curriculum coherence in the sub-region, and it may be appropriate to consider collaboration between institutions on topics such as application processes and student support services. These could be projects overseen by the framework partnership outlined in Recommendation 16.

If the collaboration outlined within this recommendation is successfully achieved, the existing structure of provision within Great Yarmouth is appropriate. The existing post 16 institutions are both rated as 'good' by Ofsted and between them provide a wide range of academic and applied opportunities. Choice and progression for learners will be enhanced by the increased collaboration resulting from this recommendation. Given this situation, there is little evidence to support the development of school sixth form provision in the area.

4.3.2. Lowestoft

The Lowestoft area covered by the Review has three high schools for learners aged 13-18, a general FE college, a special school and a range of work-based learning providers offering post 16 provision. A long established post 16 consortium (Lowestoft Sixth) exists between the three high schools to support the delivery of A Levels, with timetable alignment between the schools and Lowestoft College for 2 days a week. Work-based learning providers and voluntary organisations are working with schools and Lowestoft College to develop provision for specific groups of learners. The schools (including a PRU and another special school that pupils attend until 16), FE college, Connexions and employer representative all operate within a Lowestoft 14-19 partnership, which has a Partnership Director who is currently leading work to develop the curriculum vision for the next 5 years. There is strong collaboration with the neighbouring North Suffolk 14-19 partnership, including through Lowestoft College, which is a member of both. Both partnerships are committed to developing a 'North Suffolk' vision for future provision and diploma submissions, incorporating the new North Suffolk Skills Centre in Halesworth.

The case for change within Lowestoft's post-16 provision is compelling based upon participation rates, the size of individual sixth forms within schools and achievement levels. Suffolk County Council has recently undertaken a School Organisation Review (SOR) within Lowestoft with a preferred recommendation for a structure of primary and secondary provision where pupils change school at age 11 (end of year 6), including the intention to create a fourth high school in the south of Lowestoft. The public consultation undertaken between October 2007 and January 2008 included a proposal to develop new post 16 provision to replace the existing school sixth forms. This proposal was developed by the Lowestoft schools and Lowestoft College based upon their local experience and understanding:

“The new Lowestoft post-16 centre would be a new facility which is independently led and managed but which works in partnership with Kirkley Community High School, The Benjamin Britten High School, The Denes High School, Lowestoft College, local special schools and other stakeholders, through governing body links. The aim of the new centre would be, together with Lowestoft College, to provide education and training for all young people in Lowestoft through to the age of 18 and beyond in a setting which has first class facilities and which provides world class learning opportunities.”

Statement from Lowestoft high schools head teachers about their aspirations for post 16 provision in Lowestoft. (source: Suffolk County Council SOR Consultation document for Lowestoft)

During the Review this proposal has received support from providers, partners and local employer representatives. The School Organisation Review public consultation responses also demonstrated strong support for new post 16 provision with 73% of responses that expressed an opinion agreeing that Lowestoft would benefit from having separate 16-19 provision.

Recommendation 8: Develop new 16-19 provision for Lowestoft to replace the existing school sixth form consortium.

Structures within Lowestoft should be altered, in line with the School Organisation Review (SOR) timetable, to create new post 16 provision. Any new provision should ensure an enhanced offer for learners aged 16 to 19 and will need to be developed in partnership with local schools (including the new secondary school proposed by the School Organisation Review) and Lowestoft College to ensure a comprehensive and integrated 14-19 curriculum for all learners.

Under current LSC capital funding guidance, the next stage in progressing this recommendation is to hold a 16-19 competition. The proposal to alter structures within Lowestoft was widely tested through the School Organisation Review public consultation and through this Review. Both processes have shown strong support for the proposal. The LSC has therefore progressed this recommendation and launched a Post 16 Competition within Lowestoft in March 2008. This will allow any interested parties, including those proposing new provision, to submit proposals for a new 16-19 offer within Lowestoft. This timing also allows the Post 16 Competition to integrate as far as possible with the School Organisation Review timetable to enable clarity for learners, members of staff and the public as soon as possible. It is expected that the successful bidder will take account of the strengths of other bids and use the expertise that developed those to enhance their own proposals to the benefit of learners and staff; similarly, once the competition is concluded the successful bidder should develop links with relevant organisations that were not involved directly in the competition.

The following potential criteria for the competition emerged during this Review and have informed the specification for the competition:

- extending breadth and choice in the range of subjects young people can study
- raising participation by encouraging more young people to continue in learning between 16 and 19 years
- ensuring high quality learning
- offering value for money by using the resources available to Suffolk for its young people in the most effective way.

The rationale for this recommendation includes the following:

- Participation post 16 needs to be improved within the locality.
- School sixth-forms are individually too small to offer the required breadth of provision and are below the Suffolk SOR recommended size.
- The SOR, this Review and the opportunity for LSC capital funding provide a 'once in a generation' opportunity to deliver effective structural change that will significantly enhance provision and outcomes.
- Facilities need updating to allow effective delivery of the 17 lines of learning.
- Collaboration between providers is not sufficiently systemic.
- Capital investment could be attracted to the project. There is little evidence to suggest that retaining the current system will result in either the capital investment required across so many sites, or will result in the step-change in provision breadth and quality that is required.
- Collaboration with Lowestoft College would lead to wider learning opportunities for individual students.
- New provision would provide the opportunity to utilise a range of skills in learning and teaching for the age group, so raising progression, achievement and standards.
- New provision would provide the opportunity to develop the highest level of quality assurance and improvement and student tracking and support systems, including best practice from high performing sixth form colleges.

Recommendation 8a: Ensure that the new post 16 provision in Lowestoft is inclusive for LLDD and includes appropriate facilities, provision, and access, including sensory and therapy support.

Any new provision within Lowestoft should significantly improve the provision of inclusive and personalised learning for all learners. This includes the provision of an accessible and appropriate curriculum for LLDD as well as access to effective support services (including therapy, sensory and multi-agency support). If the competition results in new facilities being built, these need to incorporate appropriate space for these curriculum and support services.

5. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD)

5.1. Current position

In the summer of 2007, the government published a joint departmental strategy Progression through Partnership¹ which sets out the following vision:-

'To ensure that there is high quality local provision and support for the full range of post-16 learning required so that people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can learn in the setting that best suits their interests and aspirations at particular points in time...indeed, we expect that person centred approaches and effective multi-agency planning and co-operation will enable our various agencies to better support these learners to access appropriate local provision and challenge traditional assumptions about post school destinations'.

This vision is recognised by many organisations and agencies in the Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth area and there is a strong belief that it is essential to 'create integrated processes and provision for young people with LDD, centred around individual need and tailored into the overarching strategy for 14-25 learning' (LSC Review objective), so developing coherent learning pathways. It is imperative that learners with LDD are perceived to be an integral part of both policy and practice as Diplomas are developed. However, achieving this ideal is complex. It is challenging to meet a wide range of learner need through a personalised approach. All stakeholders need to work together to strategically plan towards common goals, despite their origins or different ways of working.

5.1.1. Government policy and priorities

Government policy includes the new Diploma framework (see section 4.1). However, for those learners whose achievement is below Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), additional levels of support need to be acknowledged and identified to ensure all learners' entitlement to access the 14-19 reforms. Achievement for a large and growing number of learners of all ages in mainstream and special schools working at the lower levels and below the national curriculum is measured by small step progress and accredited by awarding bodies offering a range of nationally recognised qualifications that are the basis for developing life and work skills e.g. Entry Levels 1-3, ASDAN Awards and the OCR Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL). For these learners, the new Foundation Learning Tier, which will include all nationally accredited learning below Level 2, will play an important part as it is developed. Providing progression pathways and employability is pivotal to anyone with no or low skills. Key priorities, which form the basis of the new reforms, include developing functional skills, strengthening vocational opportunities and extending young peoples' choices.

These policy drivers mean that funding agencies, particularly the LSC and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) have an increasing focus on employability and expect providers to deliver an integrated employment and skills system. This means, in turn, that strategic and delivery partners need to work together to deliver joined up skills and employment pathways that draw young people into learning and on to work with further training (see also Chapter 6).

¹ Departments for Work and Pensions, Education and Skills, and Health,
www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/progressionthroughpartnership/docs/LearnerDisabilityDocument.pdf

Although the linkage and overlap between the funding streams is not currently straightforward, it is important to note that both the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) are committed to producing guidance on where responsibility rests for funding different aspects of provision by Summer 2008. Their expectation is that local organisations will then reach agreement as part of a broader inter-agency approach to planning and funding based on person-centred approaches.

5.1.2. Studies

Studies such as the LSC report *Through Inclusion to Excellence*² have highlighted the need to develop national and regional structures to address the areas of strategy, planning, quality, funding, partnership working and learner progression.

The Skill Report *Raising Expectations: Staying in Education and Training Post-16*³ also draws attention to very practical problems encountered by young people with LDD eg. recognising lateral as well as vertical progression, the need for greater workforce development, quantifiable progression in emotional and social skills etc.

The ongoing Post-16 Transitions' a Wave 2 longitudinal study of young people with SEN⁴ identifies issues such as appropriateness of transition pathways, promotion of genuine progression, durability of high levels of multi-agency provision / support through the transition phase as high priority and highlights the difficulties for learners with LDD to enter the labour market.

Although focussed on just one LLDD group - the well being of autistic adults - the Mansell Report *Services For People With Learning Disabilities And Challenging Behaviour Or Mental Health Needs (Revised Edition)*⁵ has wider relevance. It proposes to expand capacity of services and provide them locally to facilitate support for good mainstream practice as well as directly serve a small number of people with the most challenging needs. Recognition is also given to the trend of challenging behaviour often being implicated in the placement of children with learning disabilities in residential special schools away from their home environment. These placements are often disruptive of ties with family and community, so that families face particular problems getting local services which can provide the level of support needed when responsibility passes from children's to adult services.

5.1.3. Developments

Developments are taking place at both national and regional level to promote positive steps to improve post 16 provision for learners with LDD. The LSC in the East of England is in the process of developing a Regional Implementation Plan in response to the national vision outlined in *Learning for Living and Work*⁶ and *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, which set out a clear national vision for learning and skills provision for LLDD. The LSC East of England LLDD Needs Analysis⁷ also outlines issues which are relevant to this report.

Additionally, the local authorities for both Norfolk and Suffolk are currently undertaking county-wide reviews of SEN provision. The outcomes of these reviews will need to be taken into account as they emerge and may well add to or supersede / widen the reach of some of the recommendations made below.

The LSC has implemented an *Improving Choices Pathfinder*⁸ which has successfully operated in the Norfolk /

Suffolk areas since 2005. This initiative offers young people aged 16-25 with complex learning difficulties the opportunity to access further education and work-based learning across the two counties. The programme meets individual learning needs by creating a supported bespoke package of learning, tailored to individual needs and enables the learner to engage with a variety of providers with progression routes identified. As a result of this initiative, in Suffolk 14 young people with complex SEN received intensive support through the LSC pathfinder Improving Choices and stayed in local provision⁹. In Norfolk, the same initiative has enabled Great Yarmouth College to develop a Business Enterprise Diploma which targets learners with profound / complex / multiple learning difficulties and those with sensory, mobility and physical impairments. Running since September 2007, benefits have already been seen for other LLDD groups in terms of vocational access.

Suffolk's recent Joint Area Review (JAR) has identified a priority need to improve the availability of work-related training and subsequent employment opportunities for learners with LDD. The Norfolk JAR will be completed during summer 2008. Suffolk and Norfolk LA's are undertaking independent reviews of specialist provision for LLDD.

5.2. Future demand

Regional, area and local trends indicate an increase of learners with LDD entering post 16 education¹⁰ (note: this data is county specific as sub-regional data is currently unavailable):

- Norfolk: A 9% increase by 2010 is expected in the numbers of learners with LDD potentially accessing FE in Norfolk. The greatest increase is in the moderate learning difficulties (MLD) group (61%), with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) rising by 27%, severe learning difficulties (SLD) by 15% and specific learning difficulties (SpLD) by 23%. There is also expected to be an increase in the numbers of learners accessing FE with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).
- Suffolk: overall, numbers of learners with LDD in FE in Suffolk could increase by as much as 18% by 2010 (the second highest increase in the region). The areas of learner need in which there are the greatest increases are ASD (35%), MLD (30%) and SpLD (21%).

These expected increases reflect the growing complexity of need within mainstream and special schools and this pattern is set to continue into the FE sector too. There are already local responses to some of these trends:

- The Phoenix Purple Group at City College Norwich have developed effective provision for responding to the needs of learners with high functioning autism in a mainstream FE setting.

² LSC, *Through Inclusion to Excellence: The Report of the Steering group for the Strategic Review of the LSC's Planning and Funding of Provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities across the Post-16 Learning and Skills Sector, November 2005*

³ www.skill.org.uk/uploads/media/Raising_expectations_staying_in_education_and_training_post16_response.doc

⁴ www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/RRP/u013448/index.shtm

⁵ *The Mansell Report Services For People With Learning Disabilities And Challenging Behaviour Or Mental Health Needs (Revised Edition) 2007*

⁶ LSC, *Learning for Living and Work Implementation Plan for learners with learning Difficulties and Disabilities : Consultation document, March 2007*

⁷ LSC, *East of England LLDD Needs Analysis* September 2007

⁸ For more information about *Improving Choice* in the East of England region, please see East of England, *Improving Choice in post 16 education for Young People with learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities: An evaluation of the East of England Pathfinder*, June 2006

⁹ Suffolk CYPP 2006/7

¹⁰ LSC, *East of England LLDD Needs Analysis* September 2007

- Great Yarmouth College plans to seek 'Centre of Excellence' status in addressing the needs of learners with PMLD under their planned capital programme This status would enable Great Yarmouth College to serve as a local hub of expertise for other learning providers seeking to respond to this particular area of need.
- Great Yarmouth College has been developing provision focused on the needs of learners with visual impairment and it has recently developed a pioneering strategic partnership with Action for Blind People in support of this provision.

5.3. Key future challenges

The following key challenges were identified during the review process:

- Responding to the future rise in the number of learners with LDD, we need to ensure that staff in all settings are capable of and confident in supporting individuals effectively.
- Ensuring that there are effective processes to share and develop best practice, including between institutions and across the sub-region.
- Developing effective progression routes, in learning or into employment, for learners.
- Ensuring that the curriculum and relationships with employers enable learners to gain the skills to support independent living and employment.
- Developing multi-agency integrated processes for learner transition into a new school/college or employment, including support to families and carers.
- Ensuring that a wider range of settings have facilities for therapeutic and sensory support given the increasing number and complexity of learners with LDD and the wider range of experiences available to them.
- Developing a coherent partnership to coordinate the approach to learners with LDD to minimise duplication and maximise impact for individuals.
- Overcoming funding barriers and current 'success criteria' so that support is provided to those who need it most, up to the age of 25.
- Ensuring that the needs of these learners are effectively integrated into the variety of other programmes moving forward (including Suffolk SOR, new 16-19 provision in Lowestoft, 14-19 developments and Diploma gateway applications, reviews to skills and learning funding streams).

5.4. Recommendations and rationale

Recommendation 9: Create a sub-regional project group to focus on more effective planning and joining up of local services for 14-25 learners with LDD. This project group should be formed within the framework outlined by Recommendations 16 and 17.

Partnership representation needs to be at a strategic level and should involve local colleges and schools, the LSC, the Local Authority, the Primary Care Trust, voluntary organisations, work-based learning providers and E2E providers. This group should have a specific remit and timeline for action to ensure it adds value to local learners, and inputs effectively to the reviews of LLDD that are taking place in Norfolk and Suffolk. This group would act as the 'champion' of LLDD within the sub-region, including advising FE Colleges to maximise the benefits of their anticipated capital investment. The group, in conjunction with Improving Choices, could also initiate greater staff development opportunities within the sub-region, particularly in relation to learners with mental health issues and autism.

Coordinators would be members of and report to the new workgroup. This would be an active role - a real force for action - leading and supporting sub-regional coordination of services as defined by the workgroup with strong links to the LA and LSC. Focused work might include: analysing and linking different layers of provision; developing a road map of post 16 opportunities; joining up multi-agency support; funding more effectively; working with employers to raise awareness of issues; and to expand breadth and depth of employer expertise related to LLDD.

Providing greater opportunities to develop staff expertise is fundamental to growing centres of excellence within post 16 provision. A joint-college approach to organising and registering training, building on the 2008 Suffolk special school consortium training offer (to support mainstream colleagues) which includes impact evaluation could be a valid future approach. A sub-regional approach is important to avoid duplication.

The rationale for this recommendation includes the following:

- Further developing collaborative networks of service providers committed to providing appropriate, accessible and joined up provision focused on employability, independence and inclusion.
- Underpinning a multi-agency planning, monitoring and reporting role to the LSC/LA by representatives who are themselves practitioners and have accurate knowledge of the experiences of learners with LDD.
- Learners and providers would benefit from: developing joint planning protocols; recommending joint commissioning pilots; supporting transition planning; advising on collection and use of information to identify gaps and enhance provision; overseeing links with local employers; and processes for ensuring that learner voice is captured and responded to.
- Helping to avoid duplication of services between different layers of provision and facilitate a coordinated approach to the recommendations made by this and other relevant reports, e.g. the recommendations of the LSC East of England LLDD Needs Analysis Report; the workstreams emanating from the Area JARs and the LLDD implications of School Organisation Reviews.
- Addressing the present lack of cohesion in learning pathways.
- Leading and supporting policy development workshops on specific themes, e.g. transition, autism, work experience, etc.
- Leading and supporting the development of new/existing employment opportunities for learners with LDD.
- Promoting increased consistency between organisations.
- Taking advantage of specialised workforce development already in place e.g. Titan Training supporting individual colleges and schools in upskilling staff to support independent learner travel
- Promoting the possibility of future models of provision becoming Centres of Excellence in specific areas of expertise, for example the Great Yarmouth College PMLD 'hub'
- Acknowledging that existing specialist agencies are potential sources of expertise e.g. PATOSS (for the promotion/dissemination of SpLD diagnosis and interventions); workforce development is a focus of a number of specialist support groups, e.g. BILD.

Recommendation 10: Review provision for learners with particular needs who would normally move onto part-time college placements e.g. learners with autistic spectrum disorder, to ensure that appropriate programmes based on individual learner needs are offered when they leave school.

The design and delivery of all programmes for learners with LDD (in the widest sense of LDD) need to incorporate clear routes through discrete and inclusive provision: they need to be planned sufficiently in advance to facilitate transition stages and enhance vocational access and employability (link to Recommendations 2 and 4). This includes learners in the private sector who may wish to access college provision. Planning needs to effectively involve existing schemes run by the voluntary sector. Curriculum programmes should also include full access to technologies which support learning and learners with LDD should have equal opportunity in gaining appropriate skills to use them.

Programmes may be made up of a number of elements e.g. 2 days at college, 2 days working with an employer and therapy input. This individual package approach will require a combination of agencies to plan, own and deliver personalised learning. The identification of a 'transition worker' and/or 'work coach' to support learner choice and help avoid duplication by liaising between school, college and work placement would support this recommendation. New provision for specific groups of learners with LDD may be needed. These programmes need to recognise the impact upon families as well as learners, including practical implications such as transport arrangements.

For many learners with LDD, post 16 discrete provision needs to focus on practical business and social enterprise courses leading to a portfolio of skills relevant to employer needs i.e. learning for living and work. These may lead to Foundation Learning Tier and Entry Level courses, employment or accessible apprenticeships. Joint curriculum planning needs to be encouraged between local colleges and also encompass gifted and talented learners with LDD. Early identification by colleges of learners with LDD is a key part of this process and college involvement with schools should begin by Year 8 to allow adequate time to address issues such as staff training.

The use of e-portfolios, virtual learning environments (VLE) and other new technologies need to be accessible to learners with LDD on Entry Level and Pre-Entry Level courses who may prefer these styles of learning. Where possible, college provision should also build improved links with health services to encompass relevant support from therapists (speech, language and communication therapist, occupational therapist and physiotherapist) in staff training and ensure that new technologies are effectively used to access learning.

The rationale for this recommendation includes the following:

- Identification during the review that existing part-time post 16 courses of 3 days per week present a challenge to continuity of routine for some learners.
- Recognition that the personalisation approach requires building learner ownership of choice and diversity.
- Personalised learning is dependent upon securing learner motivation through a curriculum which is accessible, flexible and relevant to future learner/employer need.
- Individual learner needs may require courses which recognise a longer cycle of learning.
- This is a proven model of provision e.g. Bay 6 Project (Mansfield), which can be showcased in-house to prospective employers.
- Collaborative planning between colleges is likely to improve quality and breadth of provision.
- Voluntary agencies are instrumental in organising work placements and supporting related learning.
- Accessing technology is a gateway to learning for some learners with LDD.
- Equal opportunity to access a relevant curriculum is a DDA issue.
- This recommendation enables the continuity of therapeutic provision from 14 to 25 as part of an overall programme for an individual.

The following case studies illustrate some of the features of this recommendation that are already present in projects within the sub-region.

Case Study

KS4 Vocational / Recreational Studies Programme: Ashley School / Warren School /

Denes High School 2001-7

This project helps learners with LDD (20 Ashley, 10 Denes in each of year 10/11) to feel more included in schooling and more fully integrated into the community when they leave. The programme runs one day per week with elements provided by the two schools and 3 local training providers: YMCA Training, Lowestoft College and Breakout. Initially funded through ESF, the programme introduces learners to accredited work related options. Its aims include: regular learning in other schools, increased access to training at post 16, appropriate curriculum and learning at Foundation / Entry level, targeted pastoral support and guidance, improved networking and staff understanding between schools and engagement of learners in community and recreational opportunities.

Case Study

Business Enterprise Diploma: Great Yarmouth College

This diploma (Pre-Entry, Entry, Level 1 and 2) targets learners with profound / complex / multiple learning difficulties and those with sensory, mobility and physical impairments. It was trialed through a successful collaborative 'skills for life' project in 2006. Funded through Improving Choices (part of a £30k allocation to the Great Yarmouth area to develop the business enterprise agenda), the diploma aims to move from a social inclusion focus into enterprise for these learners and individual learner development is emphasised to support personal growth and secure a valued and equitable place in society. Of the ten units, four are core (communication, numeracy, employability and transport training) and individual action planning is embedded throughout. Running since September 2007, benefits have already been seen for other LLDD groups in terms of vocational access etc.

Recommendation 11: Involve employers and voluntary organisations in developing the post 16 curriculum and work experience opportunities for LLDD.

Employer involvement is crucial to enabling learners with LDD to make a smooth and successful transition into the workplace and possibly continued training. Employer input into curriculum design and work-related learning is also relevant for adults who need supporting back into independent life and employment. Post 16 providers will need to work in partnership with parents, employers and voluntary agencies to develop appropriate work placements and create better support for employers by building on existing good practice. To recognise their contribution, consideration should be given to developing a recognition system for employers who are positive with respect to including / integrating learners and adults with LDD.

The rationale for this recommendation includes the following:

- Employer awareness, training and engagement with respect to learners with LDD needs greater stimulus.
- Improving the availability of work-related training and subsequent employment opportunities for learners with LDD is a Suffolk JAR Action Point.

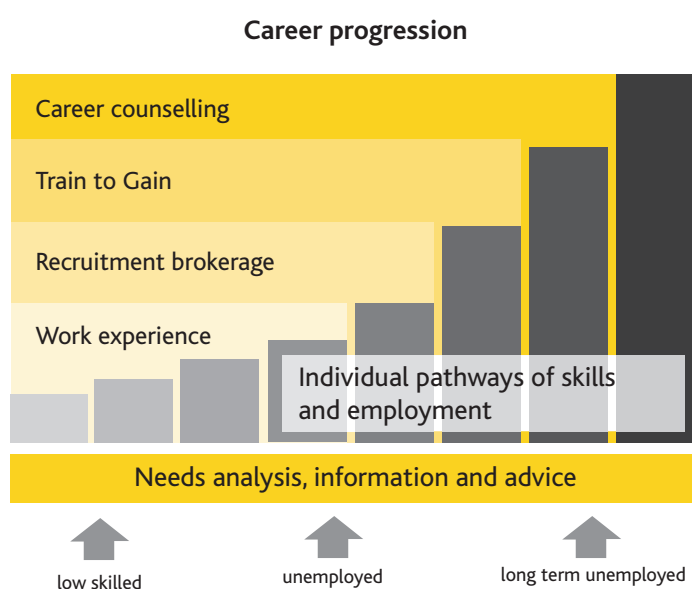
- Employment for learners with LDD needs to be seen as an expectation.
- School and social enterprise schemes and work-related learning are already in place which can act as a foundation or pre-activity to future development.
- Few employers have knowledge and expertise with respect to learners with complex needs.
- Support needs for employers should be recognised and addressed e.g. through college 'work coach' systems to specifically support learners with LDD in the workplace / voluntary sector during transition into supported work placements.
- Securing longer-term employment opportunities for learners with complex needs is not currently straightforward.
- The recognition and sharing of good practice underpins employer awareness-raising.
- A recognition system facilitates duplication of good practice and highlights what is effective in engaging employers.

6. Provision for adults and employers

6.1. National context and priorities

The current focus upon developing an integrated skills and employment system within a local area is being driven by a number of Government policies and a response to a number of reports. These include the Leitch Report, which recommended a joined up employment and skills system, particularly between Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) provision, together with a universal adult careers service and the Freud Report, on welfare reform. Recommendations from this include tackling child poverty and getting people off benefits and into work, in particular lone parents and those on Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). As a result, the government has a programme of developments to reform the welfare system, in particular in the areas of worklessness and child poverty. Funding is therefore being increasingly routed towards employment-focused learning, with funders and providers being expected to deliver an integrated employment and skills system.

Diagram 1



Source: London Region LSC

Diagram 1 above shows the pathways / stages to developing skills and gaining employment for individuals in key target groups (low-skilled, unemployed and long-term unemployed). By tailoring skills and employment pathways for individuals, with relevant work experience at an appropriate stage, followed by support with recruitment brokerage, individuals can get a job and can access further skills training through Train to Gain and, with career counselling, can continue progressing in employment.

6.2. Regional and local context and priorities

6.2.1. Economic development

- Both Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft offer a high ratio of low-paid, low-skilled, seasonal work due to the main industries in the area.
- Great Yarmouth experiences the highest levels of unemployment in the region (4.2%), whilst Waveney's is the second highest in Suffolk at 3.3%.

- Distribution, retail, hotels and restaurants accounted for more than nearly 30% of jobs in both Great Yarmouth and Waveney in 2003. Growth sectors include tourism (15% of jobs in Great Yarmouth and 10% in Waveney) and public administration, education and health (which accounted for 30% of Great Yarmouth's employment and 22% in Waveney).
- The renewable energy industry is set to create a new economy for the sub-region, particularly offshore wind energy generation. Relevant developments in the area include the Offshore Renewable Energy Centre and 'Power Park' in Lowestoft, Lowestoft College's CoVE in this area, together with off-shore wind farms near each town.
- Portuguese and Lithuanian migrant workers feature strongly in Great Yarmouth's labour market, in particular in the food industry.

The East of England Development Agency (EEDA) has an important role in economic development and in meeting regional skills needs, alongside the county-wide responsibilities of the Suffolk Development Agency. Additionally, the Local Authority regeneration and economic development teams are working on skills and employment at county and district council level and drawing down relevant regeneration and neighbourhood renewal funds.

The priorities for skills and local economic development are woven into Local Area Agreements (LAA) and the Great Yarmouth and Waveney Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) play an important role in joining up the work of the agencies. The Great Yarmouth Skills and Employment Forum and Waveney Economic Partnership are particularly relevant to this Review.

6.2.2. Adult and employer-facing learning provision

Adult Learning, Skills and Employability Need

- 18% of the working age population in Great Yarmouth and 20% in Waveney had no qualifications in 2007.
- In Great Yarmouth, 53% of adult learners have qualifications at Level 2 or above, whilst the figure was 59% in Waveney. However, the proportion of adults qualified at Level 2 or above in Lowestoft is the second lowest in Suffolk and below the England average. The percentage of unqualified adults and those with only a Level 1 qualification is particularly high.
- There are Skills for Life needs in the area, in particular numeracy, with 65% in Great Yarmouth and 50% in Waveney having entry level needs. However Entry Level and Level 1 provision in Literacy and ESOL are also a priority in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, with adult participation being constrained by poor basic skills.
- In Lowestoft, the percentage of people with a Level 4/5 qualification is exceptionally low.
- In Great Yarmouth 25% of the population is economically inactive, with 9% of the population not able to work due to illness or disability, compared to 4% across Norfolk.

The Review recognises that:

- Provision for adults and employers encompasses a very wide spectrum of need.
- There is a need to raise the aspirations of people in the sub-region.
- Great Yarmouth College and Lowestoft College are the main providers of LSC funded adult learning, including Train to Gain.

- The role of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) is important, as these organisations are often working with those furthest from employment or learning.
- In the sub-region there is currently a confusing picture overall, with “a wide ranging offer from multiple organisations, which is fragmented and uncoordinated” as reported at the workshops.
- In general, the further the distance from the labour market, the more support an individual needs. There are often multiple issues facing an individual, with a need for several agencies to be involved, often with multiple interventions e.g. housing, drugs, alcohol and mental health, together with learning or work-ready skills and support across time.
- The colleges currently belong to different Train to Gain consortium arrangements, which are county-based, rather than to a single consortium, which covers the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft area. The feedback is that Train to Gain is not particularly well-embedded in the sub-region and, to date, has had a marginal impact on providing new opportunities for learning, particularly with a profile of mainly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The overall picture of adult learning is complex, both for people working within employment and skills and also to the learner and employers.

6.3. Key future challenges

The following key challenges were identified during the review process:

- The progression of individuals into and within learning and into work.
- Providing mentoring support, particularly for those who are the hardest to reach and often the furthest from the labour market.
- Simplifying structures for learners and employers given the large number of organisations involved in adult and employer-facing provision.
- Developing learner market segmentation, in order to target particular groups.
- Making the best use of resources, including joining up funding and provision.
- Improving the quality of and access to information, advice and guidance available.
- Ensuring learning and skills sits at the centre of the economic regeneration agenda.

6.4. Recommendations and rationale

The following recommendations aim to place the progression for the individual, through adult and employer-facing provision, and in particular through Train to Gain, as the priority, bring clarity to the overall picture and propose some long-term, sustainable structures.

Recommendation 12: Develop a single adult and employer-facing service to serve the sub-region, including the creation of a new Train to Gain Consortium.

This would be achieved by formalising the collaboration between Great Yarmouth College and Lowestoft College for adult (19+) and employer-facing provision, including other training providers, and involving JCP and the voluntary sector. This formalisation may include a single committee or company with representation from partners and could include joint appointments across the colleges. This would provide a simplified structure for learners and employers.

This new single body should develop a joint action plan for workless adult and employer-facing provision, with a particular focus on:

- Developing employability pathways into Train to Gain, so that Train to Gain can be targeted towards the business and regeneration needs of the sub-region. It would raise the profile of Train to Gain and increase the take-up of training amongst low-skilled adults in work and volunteers, leading to increased provision at full Level 2 and Full Level 3 over the next 3-5 years.
- Developing an appropriate business model for the successful delivery of Train to Gain.
- Developing pathways for young people on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes through to apprenticeship programmes, building on employer engagement.
- Developing closer working relationships between FE and DWP providers to assist individuals in accessing the help they need to move into and remain in work, thereby developing a co-ordinated offer through an integrated skills and employment system.
- Increasing the opportunity for the colleges and partners to maximise apprenticeship funding.
- Working with employers to raise awareness of issues and to expand the breadth and depth of employer expertise related to LLDD. This needs to include relevant voluntary organisations working in this field.
- Widening participation into higher education.
- Identifying priority sectors and employers in the sub-region and capitalising on links to economic development partnerships and other learning groups or consortia, thereby assisting in translating provision into an employer-facing, joint-college offer.

The colleges could share resources, including a single marketing brand and strategy, together with staffing, administration and transportation costs, thereby benefiting from economies of scale. It would also create a single focus for Train to Gain in the sub-region and a route for progression onto foundation degrees.

The rationale for this recommendation includes:

- Providing a single link to employers, including through existing partnership processes (i.e. LSPs and LEPs) to develop a supply chain to fill employer vacancies together with fulfilling job and skills pledges.
- Leading collaboration with other providers and voluntary organisations and provide a single link to funders.
- Providing comprehensive IAG to different types of potential adult learners, with links to the extended schools agenda.
- Developing a range of provision in each town that identifies progression routes for all 19+ learners, including LLDD, making use of school and/or other local facilities.
- Establishing a Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Consortium that collectively procures adult provision, runs Train to Gain and would support local learning needs.
- Enabling the sharing of good practice across the sub-region, with the opportunity to develop or copy models as appropriate. The Review workshops highlighted that communication and signposting needs to be improved, with a need for mutual awareness of aims and objectives. There is a need "to communicate what's happening, understand who's doing what and where." There is also the issue of being able to access and share existing research in the sub-region.

Recommendation 13: Establish a more substantial cross-membership of the skills and employment sub-groups of the Local Strategic Partnerships across the sub-region to raise the significance of skills and employment in the economic regeneration agenda of the sub-region and integrate interventions.

There is a need to form a stronger strategic alliance of key agencies across the area to agree strategic aims, joint priorities, an alignment of plans and investments. This should be achieved through greater cross-membership of groups rather than the creation of new structures; this also continues to tie in the work of the Local Employment Partnerships to the LSP sub-groups and the work of the LSC. Cross membership facilitates closer working between organisations (including funders, providers, employers and regeneration organisations). Through this cross-membership it is possible to consider shared approaches, including joint commissioning of workless adult and employer-facing provision, pooling budgets and / or joint appointments, and evaluating the impact of work / projects in the sub-region. The groups could also consider the benefits of aligning DWP/JCP and LSC funding and provision by developing a joint procurement strategy for LSC and JCP.

The rationale for this recommendation is that it will:

- Maximise the impact of funding, including LSC, JCP, LEGI, liC and ESF monies.
- Embed comprehensive, multi-agency working between agencies for adult learning and employer-facing funding and targets.
- Ensure a strategic alignment to the developments in the wider community, including the work of the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the Local and Multi Area Agreements.
- Fully integrate operational plans of the LSPs, liC and LEGI.
- Develop links and maximise potential of the emerging Local Employment Partnerships.;
- Assist in the generation of sustainable processes that allows partnerships to take forward actions without reliance upon anyone agency or funding stream.
- Work towards developing integrated, consistent and compatible data collection and management information across the sub-region, including LSC, JCP, PCDL, county councils and LSP systems.

Recommendation 14: Continue to develop voluntary sector bidding consortia or umbrella organisations, based on the College in the Community model, to simplify the complex picture regarding agencies.

This model demonstrates the efficient use of resources and establishes one potential model for how all types of training providers might work together. Some of the more successful local partnerships, both at an operational and strategic level, develop mutual awareness and enable parties to understand each others' priorities. These consortia can maximise collective expertise, successfully match a wider range of funders' targets, overcome short term-ism in funding streams and develop sustainable provision. Further development would encourage collaboration between Suffolk and Norfolk and links to the emerging Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL) Partnerships and build on the newly formed, employer-led, JCP Local Employment Partnerships (LEP) in both counties.

This recommendation responds to a belief at workshops that there is a need to find a way to work collaboratively, to stop duplication of provision and effort (including many organisations seeking to access the same funds) and / or to target specific groups. It is possible that too many agencies make the overall picture confusing and restrict the ability to successfully compete for funding.

The implementation of recommendations from this Review needs to build on the good practice and trust developed by these partnerships, particularly as there will be an increasing reliance on the voluntary sector for the delivery of learning for adults. Examples of good operational partnerships and projects developing employability pathways in the sub-region include those identified in the following box.

Case studies

In Great Yarmouth:

- College in the Community is an umbrella organisation for Voluntary and Community sector organisations.
- HAVES (Homeless and Vulnerable Education Support) supports homeless people in improving their basic skills and employability.
- Great Yarmouth Community Trust provides a central contact point, along with the WEA.
- The Skills and Employment Forum, which is part of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), feeds into the Local Area Agreement for Norfolk.

In Lowestoft:

- The Waveney Community Learning Partnership, 'reviews the national agenda and translates it into the needs of Waveney area,' thereby making more sense of it for providers.
- The Probation Service has been developing tailored support and mentoring for disadvantaged and hard to engage people.
- Learndirect's works with employers; ESOL delivery; partnership working on employability with JCP others, including Waveney Economic partnership (WEP).

Recommendation 15: Meet the needs of both adults and employers by creating personalised/individualised skills and employability pathways for adults who are not in work and progression routes once they are in employment.

There is a need to prevent 'learner cut-off' after a single achievement, i.e. attainment of a qualification, after which progression on to further learning or employment often stops. This can be achieved by identifying the individual's learning, skills and employment needs, packaging them in a way which is attractive to the learner, identifying funding, getting partners together and identifying a lead agency. The effective use of data will identify target groups, such as JCP clients, migrant workers and adults with low level skills, in order to understand the offer in terms of levels, geographical location, support, quality and work experience opportunities. From this basis it is possible to create individual pathways, identifying referral and progression paths, including employers and ensuring there are mentors or role models for support, with informed and accessible advice and guidance throughout. This needs to include the wider community i.e. families, so that organic growth within the wider community will ensure its sustainability.

The rationale for this recommendation is that the Review workshops raised the need to join-up provision to create pathways for learners through:

- Building on existing successful partnerships, including potential links with key JCP / DWP contractors.
- The potential development of adult learning opportunities at Children's Learning Centres and Extended Schools.
- Where possible, physically, co-locating services/provision, e.g. Skills Coaching, IAG services with JCP.
- Developing progression routes which include employers and people in work, linking to Train to Gain, Level 2 and on to Level 3 qualification and skills.
- Finding local solutions to try to overcome the tension between targets and collaboration, especially as employability skills often do not have hard outcomes e.g. a job or qualification, but involve soft skills such as developing self confidence and raising aspirations.

One way to help achieve this tailored solution, meet the needs of communities and individuals and identifying the gaps in their learning and skills pathways, is to use a process such as the JH Consulting 'Licence to Skill' toolkit (www.jhconsulting.org.uk) in the sub-region. This work has been developed by the LSC, JCP and the London Development Agency through the London employability programme. This free toolkit is designed to help organisations (those planning, funding or delivering provision) to work together more effectively in finding solutions that tackle low skills and worklessness and support employability and inclusion.

The benefit of a process, such as Licence to Skill, is that it:

- Focuses planning and delivery by segmenting different groups of people and employers/sectors.
- Encourages delivery partners to work together to develop integrated employment and skills solutions.
- Makes sure that people and employers get the right kinds of programmes and support.
- Means that resources and investment can be used more efficiently and effectively.

The voluntary sector consortia and the colleges could work with a process such as Licence to Skill to develop local integrated employment and skills systems, to form a pipeline of provision that includes the Foundation Learning Tier and employer-facing training, in order to maximise opportunities with Train to Gain and Skills for Jobs.

This will become core business for providers: helping people to gain the skills they need to participate in the labour market and assisting people in employment to improve their skills in order to become more productive, particularly over the next 3-5 years.

By segmenting the market and creating pathways for workless adults and employer-facing provision, it will help tailor solutions to meet the needs of individuals and communities. For example:

- Migrant Workers (ESOL).
- JCP customers, including Lone Parents, Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) and Incapacity Benefit claimants.
- Developments with Train to Gain over next 3-5 years, including low skilled / low paid adults in employment.
- Assist development of PCDL partnerships and the emerging Foundation Learning Tier.
- Progression into higher education.

It will also support the work of the emerging, county-based PCDL Partnerships, as part of creating a pipeline into Train to Gain including the development of the following LSC funding streams:

- Foundation Learning Tier
- Skills for Life ESOL, Literacy and Numeracy
- Personal and Community Development Learning
- Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities
- Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
- Family Learning
- Other kinds of informal learning

7. A sub-regional framework for collaboration

The travel-to-learn patterns and transport infrastructure support the need to retain a broad range of provision at Entry to Level 3 within each town. It is however unlikely that either town will be able to offer all of the 17 lines of learning at all levels of achievement, especially when the range of specialisms within each line are considered. It is also unlikely to prove viable to provide specialist facilities for all options in both towns, although effective partnership with employers will help to provide a broader range of options for learners. The partnerships that drive these new lines of learning will be predominantly based upon the catchments of schools and colleges (which are, themselves, predominantly county-based). These partnerships need to undertake needs analysis processes and curriculum planning and to use these as the basis of Diploma applications. There may be merit in considering whether these county-based partnership structures should be formalised, for instance through a Trust, to increase the degree of ownership and joint accountability for learners' engagement and progress.

The geography and management of this Review recognised the increasing importance of the Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft sub-region. The Review process has confirmed the need for collaboration across current administrative boundaries to address shared challenges, embed learning within economic and physical regeneration programmes, and to develop provision for learners that provides the widest choice and highest quality while avoiding wasteful and unnecessary duplication.

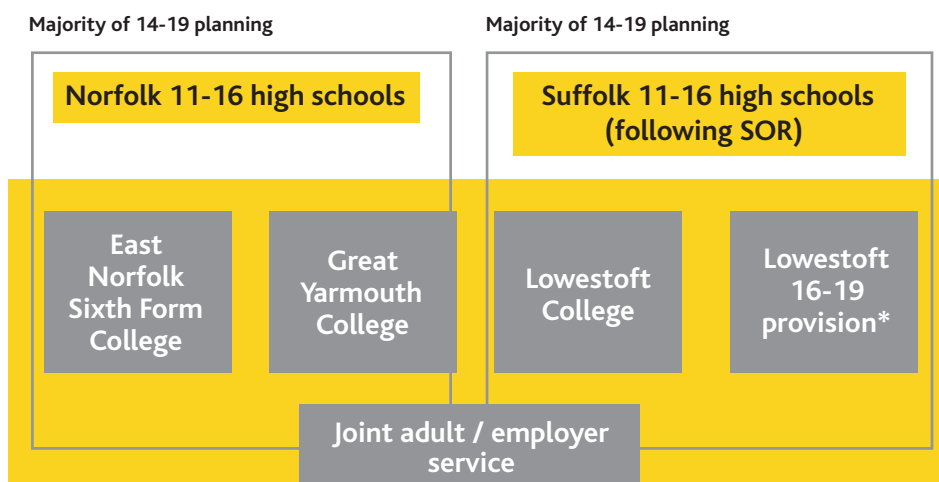
Recommendation 16: Develop a formal collaboration between the further education providers within the sub-region.

In addition to county-based partnerships, there needs to be formal cross-border collaboration to ensure effective strategic planning across the sub-region to enhance opportunities and avoid wasteful duplication.

The remit of this partnership will be:

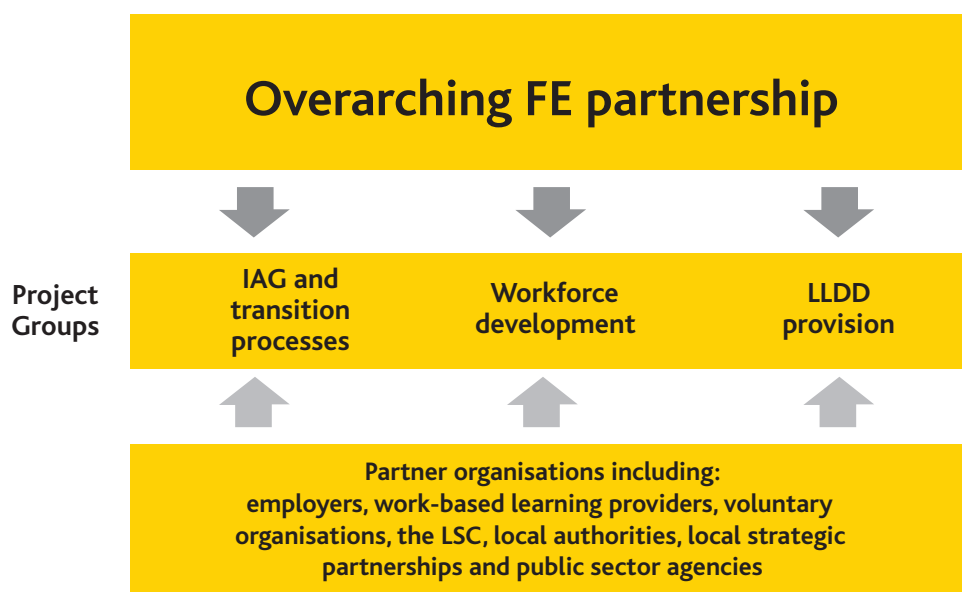
- To ensure co-ordinated curriculum planning for the sub-region, including developing sufficient capacity.
- To develop and agree an overarching capital investment plan for post 16 learning for the sub-region based upon a shared understanding of opportunity and institutional specialisms.
- To review progress across Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth in terms of reducing levels of NEET, increasing participation and levels of progression into HE.
- To be accountable for implementing recommendations 1 and 7 from this report, as well as leading the implementation of recommendation 12. The partnership will also contribute to Project Groups formed under recommendation 17.
- To explore future potential for shared services to ensure that the maximum percentage of funding is spent on learning and teaching.

Within this recognition of the need for collaboration, the partnership will respect the autonomy of individual institutions and work with existing 14-19 partnerships. The diagram below illustrates this emerging picture of networks operating at different geographical scales to address different issues.



* The future configuration of provision within Lowestoft to replace the school sixth forms will be determined through the 16-19 Competition launched in March 2008. This diagram illustrates that there will be provision for 16-19 learners to replace the sixth form consortium; the outcome of the competition will determine the format that this future provision will take.

The diagram indicates how the planning of 14-19 provision at county level links with the broader development of an adult and employer-facing service that can address the needs across both towns. This picture is expanded below to show how, within this service, the various strands and recommendations emerging from the Review can be developed and implemented.



Note: Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have both been reviewing their county-wide LLDD provision; the outcomes of those reviews will need to inform the partnership structures above.

The next step is to agree the structure and terms of reference for this partnership. This will be taken forward during 2008. It is recognised that this partnership will need to be supported by the LSC, LA, and JCP of Norfolk and Suffolk to ensure alignment with regional and national objectives.

Recommendation 17: The partnership should implement a framework for the launch, management, and successful implementation of collaborative projects to address specific opportunities or issues.

This Review has been strongly influenced by the successful involvement of partners from a variety of perspectives. Throughout the process all partners have stated their commitment to the objectives of the Review. The implementation of many recommendations requires involvement from this wide range of partners.

This recommendation recognises a tension between a desire to adopt inclusive approaches that benefit from a broad range of perspectives, and the danger of creating additional structures that add further pressure to individuals and organisations without adding value to learners.

Within the Review we sought to overcome this tension by developing strands of work, accompanied by workshops that reflected key themes that emerged. This endeavoured to adopt inclusive approaches to those themes and involve appropriate organisations and individuals at the right time and in a way that maximised their impact and made best use of their time.

This recommendation advocates that we should continue this approach within the sub-region, and that the partnership outlined in Recommendation 16 should lead this process. It proposes that:

- 'Project Briefs' should be developed for issues that need an integrated solution that is beyond the remit or ability of any one organisation. These should state the issue to be addressed, the timeframe for review/action, the funding available (for the review and its implementation), and any specific opportunities or constraints that are identified. They should also state who the 'accountable organisation(s)' is that developed the Project Brief.
- These 'Project Briefs' could be developed by any organisation; there is an expectation that the partnership of FE providers will take a lead role in the development for many areas as a result of the size of the institutions and their wide remit.
- The partnership of providers then circulates these Project Briefs to all organisations within the sub-region (including business representatives) and asks for organisations / individuals to become involved.
- A Project Group is formed from organisations that respond to the Project Brief stating that they would like to be involved.
- Those who have volunteered then select a Chair and develop their work plan to address the remit given in the Project Brief.
- Implementation of recommendations from a Project Group will require the group to create solutions that attract ownership among key partners.

It is recommended that three initial Project Briefs should be developed to implement recommendations from this review:

- **Provision for learners with LDD:** Implementing Recommendation 9 by creating a project group to improve integration of services (this also links to Recommendations 2, 10, and 11 and the interface will need to be illustrated through clear Project Briefs; it may be that one group addresses Recommendations 9-11)

- **Workforce professional development:** Developing a programme of professional development for the sub-region that allows individuals to learn from best practice, to share experiences and to develop common processes. This would build on the networking established during the Review (in particular the cross-border relationships) and enhances the capacity and capability of local organisations.
- **IAG and transition:** Create a group to implement Recommendations 2 and 3 regarding IAG and transition processes.

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Appendix One: Terms of reference for the Programme Management Board for the Review of Post 16 Education and Training in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft

Group purpose

To manage the LSC led review of Post 16 education and training in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

Membership

Learning and Skills Council Suffolk	Judith Mobbs, Area Director Lynne Tabone, Partnership Manager
Learning and Skills Council Norfolk	Sharon Goddard, Partnership Director (replaced by Graham Brough, Area Director, after Sharon was seconded) Howard Foale, Partnership Manager
Suffolk LA	Sally Simpkin, Area Director (Northern Area)
Norfolk LA	Felicity Golding, Senior Secondary Adviser
Suffolk 14-19 Strategy	Martin Slattery, Suffolk 14-19 Strategy Manager
Norfolk 14-19 Strategy	Dave Bullard, Director of 14-19 Strategy

In Attendance

Consultants to the project

Operation

The group will meet as frequently as determined necessary for the effective management of the review programme and will be chaired by the Suffolk Area Director (LSC). This Programme Board has been established with the specific purpose of overseeing the review of Post 16 provision for Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft and will cease to operate once the review is completed.

Terms of reference

1. To set the objectives for the Post 16 review and its overall scope and purpose.
2. To plan the phases of the Post 16 review and manage the implementation of each phase.
3. To commission work required to enable the Post 16 review to be conducted and to monitor the progress and outcomes of that work.
4. To ensure effective communication regarding the review with all providers and local partners.
5. To ensure effective co-ordination with the linked work of other partners, in particular the Suffolk School Organisation Review (SOR) phase 2; the education development plans for the area, including Building School for the Future and the local CYP plans for Norfolk and Suffolk.
6. To consider at each phase the outcomes of the work of the review and determine the subsequent action required.

Accountability

The Programme Board will report to the LLSC Councils for Norfolk and Suffolk and the LSC Regional Board for the East of England.

Appendix Two: Organisations involved in the Review

Acle High School
Aimhigher Norfolk
Ashley Special School
Benjamin Britten High School
Bungay High School
Caister High School
Cliff Park High School
Community Connections (Great Yarmouth)
Connexions Norfolk
Connexions Suffolk
Debenham CEVC School
Eastern Area PRU (Brooklands Centre)
East Norfolk Sixth Form College
First East
Flegg High School
Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Great Yarmouth College
Great Yarmouth Community Trust
Great Yarmouth High School
Great Yarmouth LSP
Hartismere High School
HAVEs
Include
Jobcentre Plus
John Grant School
Kirkley Community High School
Learndirect
Lifeskills Solutions
Lowestoft College
Lynn Grove VA High School
Meridian East
MOVE ON East
NIACE
Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Norfolk County Council
Norfolk Learning Partnership
Norfolk LSC
Norfolk Probation Service
Norfolk Training Services
Norwich City College
NVS
Old Warren House
Oriell High School
Sir John Leman High School
Suffolk County Council
Suffolk Development Agency
Suffolk LSC
Suffolk Probation Service
Suffolk Youth and Connexions Service
The Denes High School
Thomas Mills School
University Campus Suffolk
Warren School
Waveney District Council
Waveney Economic Partnership
WEA
YMCA Training

Learning and Skills Council
Regional Office

Learning and Skills Council
Suffolk Area Partnership
Felaw Maltings,
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