



Department
for Education

Dorset Area Review

Final Report

August 2017

Contents

Background	3
The needs of the Dorset area	4
Demographics and the economy	4
Patterns of employment and future growth	6
LEP priorities	8
Feedback from LEPs, employers, local authorities, students and staff	8
The quantity and quality of current provision	11
Performance of schools at Key Stage 4	11
Schools with sixth-form	12
The further education and sixth-form colleges	13
The current offer in the college	14
Quality of provision and financial sustainability of colleges	16
Higher education in further education	17
Provision for students with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and high needs	17
Apprenticeships and apprenticeship providers	18
Land based provision	18
The need for change	20
The key areas for change	20
Initial options raised during visits to colleges	20
Criteria for evaluating options and use of sector benchmarks	22
Assessment criteria	22
FE sector benchmarks	22
Recommendations agreed by the steering group	23
Kingston Maurward College	23
The Bournemouth and Poole College	24
Weymouth College	24
Conclusions from this review	26
Next steps	27

Background

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

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

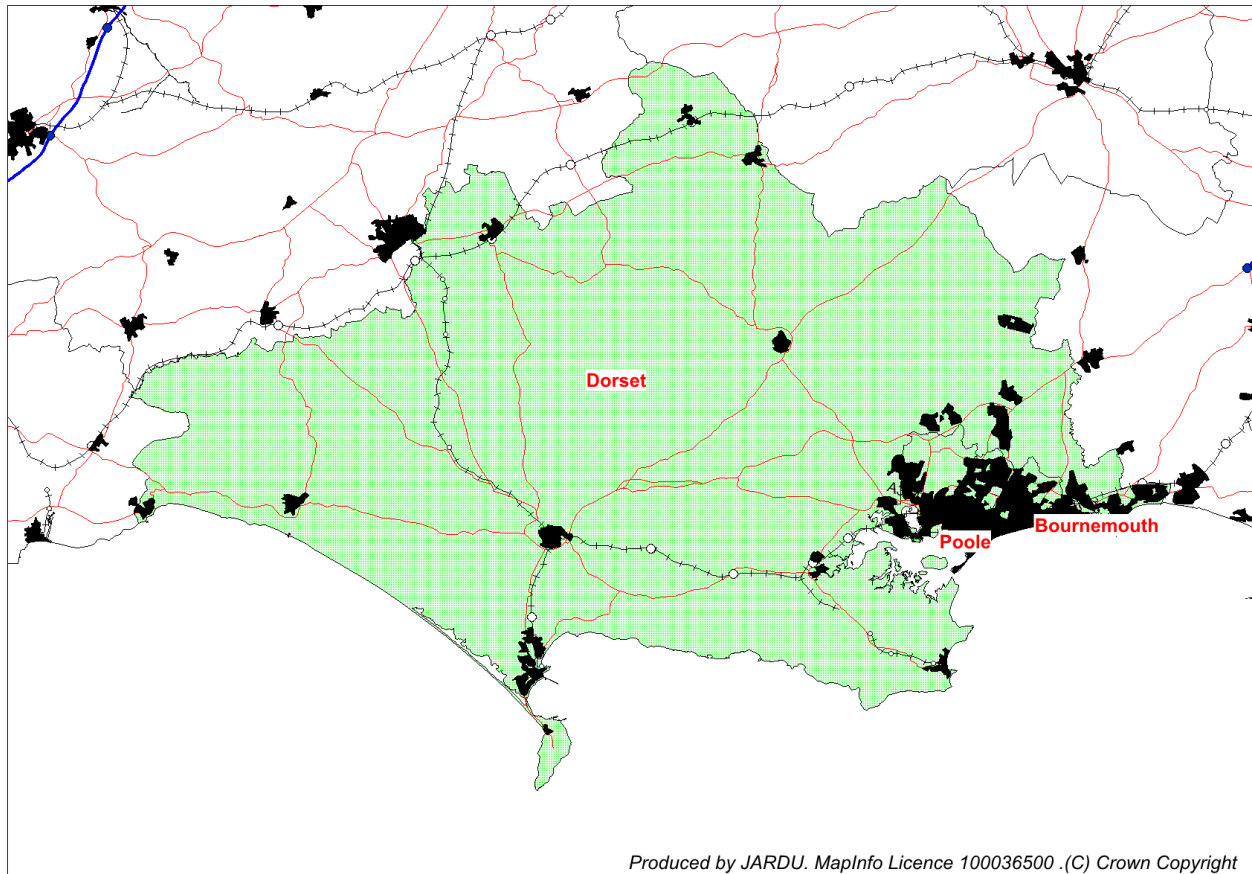
The local steering group was chaired by the Further Education Commissioner. The steering group met on 3 occasions between September 2016 and January 2017 and additional informal meetings took place to consider and develop options in greater detail. Membership of the steering group comprised each college's chair of governors and principal, representatives from Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole local authorities, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the Regional Schools Commissioner, and representatives from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Department for Education (DfE).

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

The needs of the Dorset area

Demographics and the economy

The Dorset area review covers the 3 local authority areas of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. The total population is 765,700. The area is illustrated on the maps below:



The table overleaf provides a snapshot of key demographic and economic data¹, which has acted as a starting point for this review.

¹ ONS Local Authority Profiles – see data annex – Local socio-economic data. Please note that ONS update the data set on a regular basis and that the data included relates to the point at which the report was written.

	Bournemouth	Dorset	Poole	Great Britain
Total population (2015)	194,500	420,600	150,600	63,258,400
Population aged 16 to 64	66.0%	56.1%	60.4%	63.3%
% with higher education qualifications ²	36.2%	33.9%	37.2%	37.1%
Those formally qualified to level 2+	78.6%	76.6%	78.0%	73.6%
Gross weekly pay £ of residents	510.9	501.6	530.8	541.0
Gross weekly pay £ by workplace	531.7	481.8	513.9	540.2
Out-of-work benefit claimants	1.6%	0.9%	1.2%	1.9%
% of main benefit claimants	8.7%	6.5%	6.7%	8.6%
Jobs density ³	0.74	0.83	0.97	0.82
Total workplace units:				Average for the South West
Micro ⁴	83.1%	85.3%	83.3%	84%
Small	13.8%	12.6%	13%	13.2%
Medium	2.7%	2%	3.2%	2.5%
Large	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%

2 Percentages relate to those aged 16 to 64

3 Job density relates to the level of jobs per resident aged 16-64. For example, a job density of 1.0 would mean that there is one job for every resident aged 16-64. The job density for the south west as a whole is 0.86, which is slightly above the national average.

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

The key points to note are:

- Poole Borough Council area has the highest percentage of residents qualified at level 4 or above (37.2%). Dorset County Council area has the lowest at 33.9% with the national average standing at 37.1%
- all 3 local authorities have an above national average (73.6%) proportion of their residents formally qualified to level 2 or above
- weekly wages of residents are significantly lower than the national average for Bournemouth and Dorset
- rates of out of work and main benefit claimants are below the national average in all the local authority areas, and significantly lower in Dorset
- job density in Poole is markedly higher than in Bournemouth and, at 0.97, the job density in Poole is significantly above the national rate
- over 85% of businesses in the Dorset County Council area are micro businesses, which employ 1 to 9 people. This is slightly higher than the national average of 84%.

Patterns of employment and future growth

The Dorset LEP area had 348,100 residents in employment in 2013 and this is forecast to rise by 50,400 or 14.5% by 2033. There is a relatively strong concentration of employment in the public sector, but this is vulnerable to reductions in funding. Unemployment in the review area is low⁵.

The top 10 employment sectors⁶ currently and those that are forecast to employ more than 10,000 people in the Dorset LEP area between 2013 and 2033 are shown in the table below:

Top ten sectors by employment 2013 to 2033

2013		2033	
Retail trade	40,800	Construction	45,700
Education	31,800	Retail trade	39,600
Construction	28,200	Education	32,600
Health	24,200	Residential & social	32,200
Residential & social	23,900	Health	27,400

⁵ [Strategic Economic Plan for Dorset](#)

⁶ [Key Sectors in the Dorset LEP Area – March 2016](#)

2013		2033	
Financial & insurance	20,000	Financial & insurance	24,200
Public Administration & Defence	20,000	Food & beverage services	22,400
Food & beverage services	16,300	Business support services	22,200
Business support services	15,300	Public Administration & Defence	19,100
Other services	10,300	Other services	12,100
Wholesale trade	10,100	Recreational services	10,500

The largest sectors in the Dorset LEP economy in terms of employment are:

- public administration
- education and health
- financial and other business services
- wholesale and retail.

Dorset has higher than (national) average employment in:

- manufacturing
- construction
- wholesale and retail
- accommodation and other food services
- public administration
- education and health and other services.

The latest data provided⁷ shows that 38,900 people commute out of the Dorset LEP area to work, and 25,800 people commute into the area – giving a net out-commuting figure of 13,100. Ninety two percent of workers live in the area, and 89% of residents work in the area.

⁷ [Economic Strategy for Dorset Evidence Base](#)

LEP priorities⁸

There are a number of key sectors in the Dorset LEP area which should be prioritised. Work undertaken in 2016 has identified advanced manufacturing and financial services and insurance as the highest priority sectors in terms of their importance to the Dorset economy, based on their quality and growth prospects. These are followed by the creative industries, environmental goods and service sectors. The largest forecast growth in the Dorset LEP area economy is in the construction sector, with an additional 17,500 employees between 2013 and 2033.

Identified skills gaps and shortages across the area (2013), include significant weaknesses in engineering skills. The demand for skills to replace those who are leaving the workforce (e.g. through retirement) is much greater than the demand for skills generated by projected growth in the economy.

In its Strategic Economic Vision for Dorset⁹ the LEP proposes that to build a world class workforce the percentage of the population who are qualified to level 3 and 4, will need to increase to by 2033.

School leavers' attainment levels are below average, with a particular problem in the Dorset County Council area. However, entries to GCSEs in STEM subjects are just above the national average. Whilst the number of apprenticeships has grown in the Dorset LEP area over the last decade, the rate of growth has fallen behind the national rate of growth.

Further work is required to confirm the key sectors and understand their potential contribution to the future economic growth of the Dorset LEP area.

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

Feedback from LEP representatives, local authority representatives and employers consulted during the area review process drew attention to:

From Dorset LEP, Dorset County Council, Poole Borough Council, and Bournemouth Borough Council:

- students need to have access to colleges that deliver a curriculum that reflects industry needs and where any new curriculum offer is informed by the needs of the local economy

⁸ [Economic Strategy for Dorset Evidence Base](#)

⁹ [A Strategic Economic Vision For Dorset](#)

- colleges need to strengthen their business relationship to better understand industry needs and the links to key sectors
- a need for suitable provision across Dorset for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to reduce the numbers of young people being placed outside of the area
- colleges need adequate facilities and equipment to develop skills
- Dorset County Council area needs more provision at level 2 and below with English and maths provided in a flexible way
- there is a need for more traineeships places, particularly in rural Dorset
- there is a need for re-engagement programmes leading on to vocational skills development for those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), with flexible, timely programmes at both Bournemouth and Poole campuses for more vulnerable learners/NEET and/or better transport
- growth in delivery and awareness of advanced and higher level apprenticeships is needed
- transport issues in rural Dorset means that where there is no public transport some young people are unable to participate easily in learning of their choice
- improvements in success rates for English and maths GCSEs are needed.

Feedback from employers who were engaged with during the review:

- the main relationship with colleges was linked to apprenticeships for those that responded, with some employers providing work experience placements and help with careers events
- in general, many employers felt that they have a very good relationship with colleges with close liaison and regular meetings
- some employers suggested that skills and facilities are lagging behind industry standards with regard to technology and manufacturing
- most employers were happy that their business needs were being met by skills development in their area. Some referred to gaps in engineering-related skills
- There was concern about a lack of funded development schemes for those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and a lack of independent careers advice with sufficient information on STEM-related careers paths
- employers want to work with colleges that understand business and employer needs, effective communication, are flexible with modes of delivery, have high standards of education and have account management principles: one point of contact with a 'can do' attitude and anticipating the needs of its customers
- some employers said they provided advice, guidance, and/or expert industrial knowledge to the colleges within the review area.

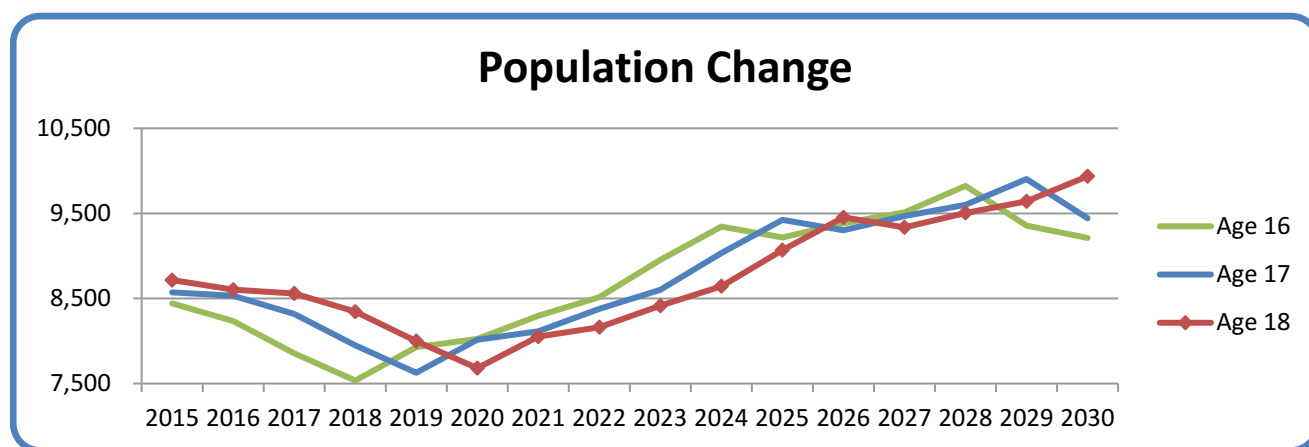
For each area review the National Union of Students submitted a report on the views of students which was considered by the steering group. Where the NUS submitted a report these are available on [NUS connect](#).

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

The quantity and quality of current provision

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

In Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole the numbers of young people aged 16 to 18 is declining until about 2019¹⁰. The below chart shows the expected cohort change in the Dorset County Council, Poole Borough Council and Bournemouth Borough Council areas by 2030. The numbers of residents in the age 16-18 cohort is expected to fall by 8% between 2015 and 2019, and then increase by around 21% between 2019 and 2030.



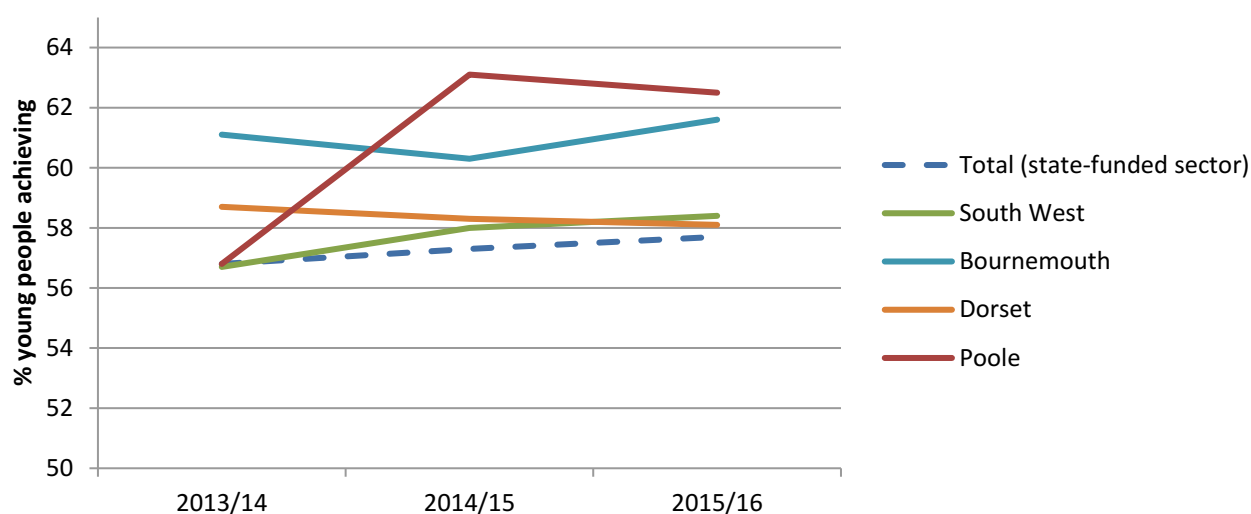
Performance of schools at Key Stage 4

The recent trend in GCSE results for 16 year old school pupils completing year 11 across the 3 local authorities is illustrated overleaf¹¹.

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

¹¹ School Key Stage 4 results – see data annex. Local authority and total (state-funded sector) figures covering achievements in state-funded schools only.

Five A*-C Grades including English and Maths



GCSE results in Bournemouth are 3.9 percentage points above the 2015/16 national average of 57.7%, and outcomes are also above the regional average, although there was a decline between 2013/14 and 2014/15. GCSE grades in Dorset have been declining slightly since 2013/14 and stand at 0.4 percentage points above the national average in 2015/16. After a sharp increase, from 2013/14 to 2014/15, results in Poole are 4.8 percentage points above the national average for 2015/16¹², and are also above the regional average.

Schools with sixth-form

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

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

¹² In 2013 to 2014, a change in how the GCSE performance of schools was defined led to a drop in the overall numbers of young people achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C including maths and English.

There are currently 33 funded schools with sixth-forms in the review area, including 10 local authority maintained schools with sixth-forms, 21 academies and 2 studio schools.¹³ Most school pupils in the age range 16 to 18 are enrolled on A level courses.

Overall funded student numbers in mainstream school sixth-forms decreased by 16 in the 3 years 2014 to 2015 to 2016 to 2017 with a total of 8,426 young people funded in a mainstream sixth-form setting in 2016 to 2017¹⁴. School sixth-forms in the area vary in size but, using as a guide, for illustration purposes only, the application threshold of 200 for new school sixth-forms in academies, there are 14 school sixth-forms (including local authority maintained and academies but excluding special schools) that were funded below that figure in 2016 to 2017. The majority of schools with sixth-forms were graded by Ofsted as good or better.

The further education and sixth-form colleges

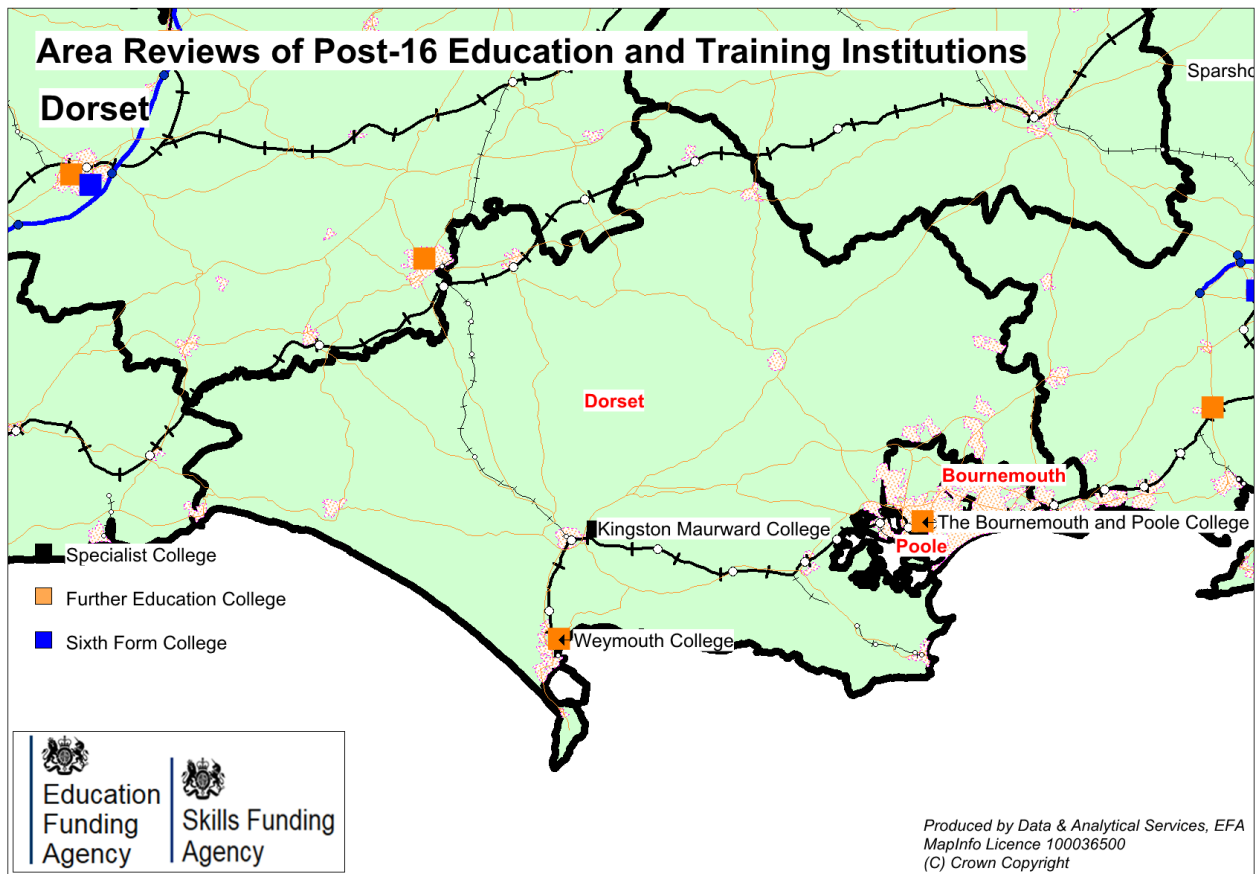
Two general further education colleges and one specialist agricultural college participated in this review:

- The Bournemouth and Poole College
- Kingston Maurward College
- Weymouth College.

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

¹³ EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding. Where part of a local authority is in the review area, that local authority has been included in the school sixth-form data.

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



Part of the area review process involved a visit to each college by specialist further education and sixth-form college advisers who report to the respective commissioners. The advisers met with governors, senior managers and staff, and reviewed a wide range of documents and data relating to each college’s current range and quality of provision, their track record in attracting students, and their overall financial health. Through a data sharing protocol between members of the steering group, the information from each of these visits was shared with colleges and has informed the evidence base to the steering group for this review.

The current offer in the college

Bournemouth and Poole College and Weymouth College offer A levels. The 2 general further education colleges offer a broad range of technical provision for young people and adults including foundation learning, maths and English, apprenticeships for learners ages 16-18 and adults, and some higher education provision.

The highest volumes of technical courses offered are in the following areas:

- arts, media and publicity
- health, public services and care
- engineering and manufacturing technologies
- construction, planning and the built environment
- retail and commercial enterprise.

Kingston Maurward College is a specialist land based college serving, predominantly, the county of Dorset. However, because of its specialist offer, it also attracts students regionally and to some extent nationally. The college is located on the outskirts of the town of Dorchester and 9 miles from Weymouth.

Quality of provision and financial sustainability of colleges

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

College	Most recent overall Ofsted grade ¹⁵	EFA allocations (2016 to 17) ¹⁶	SFA allocations (2016 to 17) ¹⁷	Total college income in 000s (2014 to 2015) ¹⁸
The Bournemouth and Poole College	Good (February 2016)	£15,240,439	£8,614,208	£36,281
Kingston Maurward College	Good (September 2014)	£4,723,788	£1,799,578	£10,374
Weymouth College	Good (November 2015)	£5,947,511	£2,192,791	£12,853

Where a college was subject to a financial notice of concern or a financial notice to improve this was a factor which was taken into account in the assessment of options in the review. Weymouth College is subject to a financial notice of concern issued by the Skills Funding Agency.

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

¹⁵ Ofsted – see data annex: College inspection reports

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

¹⁷ SFA allocations – see data annex: Adult funding

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

Higher education in further education¹⁹

Progression of young people to higher education across Dorset is variable, and below the national rate. HEFCE data shows that progression rates by age 19 into higher education in the area historically range from 33.6% in the Dorset County Council area, to 32.7% for Poole residents and 29.6% in Bournemouth. This is compared to an average for England of 34.7%²⁰.

The colleges in the Dorset review area deliver a range of higher education courses directly funded by HEFCE and all also work in partnership with universities delivering franchised or non-franchised programmes.

Bournemouth University offers the majority of higher education provision within the area, with over 15 undergraduate courses. The Arts University Bournemouth offers specialist courses in subjects including creative arts and design and architecture as well as building and planning.

Kingston Maurward College has a small number of niche higher education subjects delivered in partnership with the Royal Agricultural University and Bournemouth University. The Bournemouth and Poole College has a direct contract with HEFCE, and courses are delivered under a validating agreement with Bournemouth University with the exception of Performing Arts, which is validated by Arts University Bournemouth. Other university partners include Southampton Solent and Wolverhampton. Weymouth College has a strong relationship with Plymouth University, which has validated and continues to support a large number of progression routes from the college's level 3 programmes.

Provision for students with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and high needs²¹

In 2016 to 2017, the EFA funded 468 post-16 places across the 3 local authority areas in colleges, special schools and specialist post-16 institutions. Colleges delivered 123 funded places between them. The college delivering the highest numbers of funded places is Kingston Maurward.

During the review, local authorities expressed a need for some changes to the high needs provision offered by colleges. Bournemouth and Poole local authorities identified an additional need in provision for vulnerable young people at both Bournemouth and Poole campuses. Dorset County Council identified the need to ensure young people with SEND have an increased range of opportunities and the support to access them by developing

¹⁹ HEFCE POLAR 3– see data annex: Higher education progression

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

²¹ EFA Allocations – see data annex: 16 to 19 funding: High needs

specialised programmes of study for learners with SEND. This should include developing technical opportunities in further education colleges, including more supported internships. The local authorities suggested that colleges need to review their SEND provision to be more skills/technical based rather than 'preparation for work', and to move away from 3 year pathways where appropriate for the young person.

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

Apprenticeships and apprenticeship providers

In 2015 to 2016, there were 8,660 apprenticeships delivered in the local authority areas within the review area²². Overall, the most popular frameworks were: business, administration and law; engineering and manufacturing technologies; and health, public services and care.

The colleges in the review area delivered between them 2,950 apprenticeships in 2014 to 2015. Of these, 58% were at level 2 and 48% at level 3. In total, the colleges reported 40 higher level apprenticeships delivered in the same period.

Six independent training providers based in the review area were publicly funded to deliver apprenticeships. These providers delivered a total of 10,540 apprenticeships in 2014 to 2015.

This pattern may change in 2017, with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy²³.

Land based provision

Landex, the sector organisation that represents a significant number of colleges which deliver land based provision, has prepared a report for steering groups on the mix and balance of land based provision across the country, the key deliverers of this and the importance of that provision to the sector and the economic development of the country.

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

²² Numbers of apprenticeships by provider and LA – see data annex: Apprenticeships

²³ ['Apprenticeship levy and how it will work' on gov.uk](#)

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

Kingston Maurward College is a land based college in Dorchester and the largest areas of provision offered are in agriculture, horticulture and forestry, and animal care and veterinary science with a significant offer in classroom-based technical courses. Nationally, apprenticeships in the land based sector have been slow to grow and there is a low rate of progression to level 4 and above among students who go into employment in the sector after completing a level 2 or level 3 programme.

The need for change

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

The key areas for change

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

- increase the post-16 learning offer at level 2 and below that is vocationally relevant, is flexible and develops employability of young people, including engaging 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training
- improve educational participation and attainment where outcomes are below national averages, particularly in English and maths
- increase the range of post-16 provision for students with high needs in order to improve choice, raise attainment and prepare those young people for adulthood
- ensure that post-16 provision is accessible, taking into account rurality and the limitations of the public transport system
- develop higher and degree level education and skills within the working age population, recognising the need within the Dorset economy to drive local productivity by ensuring progression to level 4 and above. This is particularly the case in sectors such as care, construction, finance and insurance, creative industries, advanced engineering and manufacturing, tourism and agri-tech
- further develop the collaboration between colleges in Dorset and employers, and promote links with industry to develop education and training opportunities at all levels
- grow apprenticeships to contribute to growth in the Dorset economy and the government's target of 3 million by 2020, including higher level apprenticeships. This includes raising awareness locally
- secure the financial viability of the colleges in the area to ensure sustainable post-16 provision in curriculum areas where the colleges deliver to learners in specific geographical areas or deliver specialist provision
- ensure that colleges have appropriate and good quality facilities and equipment
- develop the collaborative approach of the Dorset colleges to enhance the further education offer overall in terms of breadth, viability and specialisms.

Initial options raised during visits to colleges

During their visits, advisers reported that all colleges had given considerable thought to potential strategic options in advance of the review. In some cases, this meant informal

discussions with neighbouring colleges and stakeholders to canvas views and to assess the potential level of support for change.

The types of options discussed were:

- formal structural change (mergers or federations) which, if well planned and carefully managed, were considered to have the potential to improve financial viability, address quality issues, and retain a good choice of subjects and options for students. A discussion took place to review whether there was any benefit to merger. It was agreed that this option would not be pursued
- the potential for collaboration to reduce costs and to share services. The colleges within the review area were looking at the potential for working together on higher education marketing. The Bournemouth and Poole College have a shared services company with Brockenhurst College (which is in a neighbouring county) for finance, data, payroll, exams, student admissions, HR services and purchasing. Ongoing discussions are exploring further collaboration between colleges within the Dorset review area
- discussion between colleges about the case for specialisation and further collaboration. Collaborative working between the 3 Dorset colleges and the LEP and local authorities was discussed to enhance opportunities and ensure local skills and employability needs are met
- the case for remaining stand-alone if a college could demonstrate long-term financial sustainability and maintain good or outstanding quality rating from Ofsted. This was the preferred option to pursue by all the colleges in the review area.

Criteria for evaluating options and use of sector benchmarks

Assessment criteria

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

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

FE sector benchmarks

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

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

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

The assessment of options indicated that, based on the information available to the area review steering group, the colleges would move towards the benchmarks and indicators through successful implementation of options, and that the protected characteristics groups, including high needs students, would retain at least equal access to learning. More detail about these benchmarks is contained in area review guidance Annex F²⁴ (revised March 2016).

²⁴ [Reviewing post-16 education and training institutions: updated guidance on area reviews Annex F, Pages 49-53](#)

Recommendations agreed by the steering group

Four recommendations were agreed by the steering group at their meeting in January 2017. These were:

- Kingston Maurward College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit. Due to the college's specialist nature, it will continue to engage via Landex on specific land based opportunities.
- The Bournemouth and Poole College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit. The college will develop and extend its collaborative shared services partnership with Brockenhurst College and establish an apprenticeships joint venture company.
- Weymouth College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit.
- Collaborative working between the 3 Dorset colleges to enhance opportunities and ensure local skills and employability needs are met.

Each of these options is now outlined in more detail:

Kingston Maurward College

Kingston Maurward College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit. Due to the college's specialist nature it will continue to engage via Landex on specific land based opportunities.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college is a specialist land based institution delivering provision to learners from across the Dorset area. A wide range of specialist provision will continue to be offered from foundation level to level 6, including opportunities for 14 to 16 years olds, and apprenticeships, which are a LEP and employer priority for the area. This also includes continuing to improve educational participation and attainment, particularly in English and maths and continued development of SEND provision
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment demonstrated that the college is sustainable and resilient, meeting four financial benchmarks immediately. If the college delivers its current plan it is likely to make good progress towards the remaining benchmark of achieving benchmark operating surpluses by 2019/2020
- in respect of quality of provision, the college is graded as good by Ofsted and will work with the other colleges in the review area on joint staff development and peer review, with an early focus on leadership and management and sharing good practice

- the college will continue to deliver a specialist land based curriculum offer and a commercial offer that makes additional use of its estate and skills base.

The Bournemouth and Poole College

The Bournemouth and Poole College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit. The college will develop and extend its collaborative shared services partnership with Brockenhurst College and establish an apprenticeships joint venture.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college offers mainly technical qualifications, with some A level provision to young people and adults. Provision is offered in 14 of the 15 sector subject areas, the exception being the agriculture, horticulture and animal care sector. The college continuing work to improve educational participation and attainment, particularly in English and maths and continued development of SEND provision. The college has an apprenticeship programme with in excess of 1,000 students and is exploring the potential for a joint apprenticeship model with Brockenhurst College
- with regard to financial sustainability, initial financial assessment demonstrated that the college is sustainable and resilient with a robust balance sheet and achieving four of the key benchmarks already. The college is likely to make good progress towards the remaining operating surplus benchmark by 2019 to 2020
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was graded as good by Ofsted. The college has stated its commitment to improving quality, delivering a wide range of interventions across the whole college led by senior staff, governors and curriculum managers. The college will work with the other colleges in the review area on joint staff development and peer review, with an early focus on leadership and management and sharing good practice
- the college will continue to deliver a broad curriculum including specialisms that meet the LEP's priorities such as engineering (including composites), construction, health and social care and digital. It will to work with the local authorities on developing provision for those who are not in education, employment or training. The college has expressed interest in the development of a proposal for an Institute of Technology in the Bournemouth and Poole conurbation.

Weymouth College

Weymouth College to continue as a stand-alone institution, collaborating with the other 2 colleges in the Dorset review area on areas of mutual benefit.

- in terms of meeting current and future needs, the college offers a broad curriculum and offers provision in 14 out of the 15 sector subject areas. The offer is aligned to the LEP and local authority priorities including English and maths. Programmes offered range from entry level to higher education and include apprenticeships.

Provision for students with high needs has been re-introduced and a specialist unit created

- with regard to financial sustainability, this college has faced considerable challenges in recent years but is now improving and likely to achieve the majority of benchmarks by 2017 to 2018. Strong operating performances will improve both the college's balance sheet and overall resilience and, provided planned growth is achieved, the college moves towards the remaining benchmarks by 2019 to 2020
- in respect of quality of provision, the college was assessed as good by Ofsted and will work with the other colleges in the review area on joint staff development and peer review, with an early focus on leadership and management and sharing good practice
- the college will continue to deliver a broad curriculum to meet learner and employer needs in the Weymouth area. The curriculum delivery areas reflect local and national priorities from entry to degree level, including public services, health and social care, sports and leisure, construction and engineering trades, travel and tourism.

Collaborative Working

Collaborative working between the 3 Dorset colleges to enhance opportunities and ensure local skills and employability needs are met.

The colleges will work together on:

- strengthening the higher education offer and providing joint approaches to marketing
- strengthening and growing the apprenticeship offer across the 3 colleges
- joint staff development and peer review, with an early focus on leadership and management and sharing good practice
- a cross-Dorset approach to SEND to deliver a foundation learning offer and a single prospectus of provision for students with high needs
- improving accessibility to further education provision, taking into account rurality and the limitations of the public transport system.

Progress will be monitored and supported through the Strategy and Policy Sub-group of the Employment and Skills Board, which reports to the board of the Dorset LEP. Operational work on the agreed recommendations will be carried out through the Joint Principals' Forum.

Conclusions from this review

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

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

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

- growing the breadth of apprenticeships, traineeships and the higher level offer by greater collaborative working across the review area
- utilising the Strategy and Policy Sub-group of the Employment and Skills Board to help support and drive developments to meet local and employer needs. This will include identifying and addressing any gaps in types or level of provision, particularly in relation to apprenticeships, high needs learners, level 2 and below and higher level education
- having financially resilient colleges that develop clear pathways leading to skilled employment or higher education, thereby helping to raise aspirations and attainment of learners in the area
- working to improve educational participation and attainment, particularly in English and maths
- collaborating to ensure needs of learners and employers are met
- ensuring that post-16 provision is accessible, taking into account rurality and the limitations of the public transport system.

Next steps

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

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

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

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



Department
for Education

© Crown copyright 2017

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

About this publication:

enquiries www.education.gov.uk/contactus

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Reference: DFE-00195-2017



Follow us on Twitter:
[@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)



Like us on Facebook:
facebook.com/educationgovuk