

Report to: East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP)  
Date: May 9 2016  
Title: Sussex Post 16 Area Review  
Author: Elizabeth Funge, East Sussex County Council  
Purpose: To provide a summary of and update on the Sussex Post 16 Area Review.

**Recommendation:**

The East Sussex Strategic Partnership is recommended to note the report.

## **1. Introduction/Background**

1.1. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Education (DfE) are undertaking an Area Review of Post-16 Education across Sussex, which includes all further education (FE) and sixth form colleges in Sussex, excluding Collyer's in Horsham. The delivery plan for the review runs from October 2015 - May 2016; 40 Reviews will be undertaken nationally during this period.

1.2. The purpose of the review is to see a restructuring and rationalisation of the FE Sector with a view to having 'fewer, larger and more resilient and efficient' FE providers with greater focus/specialisms. The Review has assessed the economic and educational needs of the area, the consequential need for Post-16 provision locally, and is considering the current structure of FE education to see if these needs are appropriately met.

## **2. Membership and Timetable**

2.1. The Review is led by the FE Commissioner and the steering group is comprised of Chairs of governors of each institution, FE and Sixth Form College Commissioners, local authorities (upper tier), LEPs, funding agencies, Regional Schools Commissioners and representatives from BIS/DfE.

2.2. The timetable for the steering group meetings in Sussex is as follows:

Oct 2015: Data review and analysis, planning next steps  
Dec 2015: Examining curriculum offer and possible rationalisation  
Jan 2015: Financial savings (estate, capital and operations)  
Feb 2016: Discussion about emerging possible options  
Mar 2016: Draft report and meeting with college governors  
April 2016: Draft recommendations  
May 2016: Final report

## **3. Draft Recommendations**

The review has identified the need for colleges in Sussex to be more responsive to employer needs and, in particular, to develop provision at Levels 3 and 4 in key sectors. The draft recommendations discussed by the steering group at their April meeting included:

- Closer working / partnerships between some of the FE Colleges in Sussex, in order to secure efficiencies and align their offer to better meet the needs of employers. Some colleges in Sussex will remain as stand-alone institutions where they believe this is sustainable for the longer term.

- These recommendations are currently being considered by the colleges' governing bodies in advance of the final meeting in May.
- Some of the colleges are developing closer working / partnerships with FE Colleges outside of the Sussex area and so these proposals will be developed over a longer timeframe.
- Sixth Form Colleges are exploring the option to convert to Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).
- Further development / implementation of shared services between the colleges