



City of Westminster

Economic Development, Education and Place Shaping Policy and Scrutiny Committee Briefing

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Title:	WAES Strategic Review: Key Findings & Recommendations
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Cabinet Member Portfolio:	Cllr Timothy Barnes, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education & Skills
Wards involved:	All
Policy context:	City for All Thriving Communities WAES Forward 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
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1. Executive Summary

This report provides Committee with an overview of Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES). The report includes the findings of a strategic review of the Service led by the Regeneration & Economic Development Service in Growth Planning & Housing. Following input from Committee, the review findings will be progressed with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education & Skills, the Executive Director for Growth, Planning & Housing, the WAES Principal/Head of Service and the WAES Governing Body.

2. Key Matters for the Committees Consideration

The Committee is asked for a view on:

- The Key Findings from the Strategic Review of WAES
- WAES' contribution to City for All priorities and its potential to deliver increased local impact
- The recommendations relating to the 3 Strategic Challenges facing the Service
- The 3 collaborative projects WAES are proposing to adopt in year 1 as early priorities

3. Introduction to WAES

Westminster City Council's Adult Education Service is well-established with an excellent reputation both locally and across London. Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) offers a diverse portfolio of education and training to in excess of 10,000 learners per year. As London's largest Adult Education provider, at more than double the size of any other London service its scale is equivalent to a significant Further Education (FE) College. The Service delivers programmes from its three main centres, Lisson Grove, Pimlico and Amberley as well as from more than 80 community venues across Westminster and the surrounding boroughs. This provides a significant 'reach' across the borough and into communities. The Service employs over 200 experienced, well-qualified and committed staff who are ambitious for their learners with an unflinching commitment to supporting and enabling learners to successfully achieve their goals.

WAES offers an inclusive portfolio of career focused and community learning programmes, which targets the hardest-to-reach learners and those with multi-faceted socio-economic challenges. WAES has an excellent reputation with the local community and plays a key role in combating isolation, promoting social integration and celebrating the diversity of our communities through its family and community learning programmes. Approximately 35% of WAES portfolio is ESOL and ranges from pre-entry to Level 2. 30% is Basic Skills. The remaining portfolio ranges across Professional Pathways and the Apprenticeship offer, which includes subjects such as Health and Social Care, Early Years, Accounting and Business, as well as a range of Apprenticeship and Traineeships in Hospitality and the Sports industry, along with the Creative offer – Floristry, Fashion, Graphics, Fine Art, Hair, Make-up and Ceramics. The offer also includes a range of programmes for learners with a learning disability or difficulty.

4. About the Review

Westminster City Council commissioned Stephen Lay of SLA FE Consultancy Ltd to work with the WCC Head of Business and Enterprise and WAES Principal/Head of Service to undertake a strategic review of the Westminster Adult Education Service. Stephen Lay is a former Local Authority Adult & Community Learning Principal and is currently a consultant who has supported a significant number of Local Authority Adult & Community Learning providers both in London and the wider UK. He has also held a senior role with HOLEX as the national lead for Governance and is an Associate Consultant for the Association of Colleges. The review aimed to help the City Council and specifically the Westminster Adult Education Service to:

- 1) Give WAES prominence on its work and impact/outcomes achieved to date.

- 2) Continue to improve the quality and effectiveness of adult education and training strategy and provision, playing a key role in meeting the economic and educational needs of the area, increasing learner participation, raising achievement and supporting progression.
- 3) Acquire a better understanding of how WAES can best position itself both in terms of impacts and opportunities in relation to the future of adult skills and successfully deliver on its new Strategic Plan for the period 2019-22.
- 4) Identify the future needs of the service including WAES accommodation requirements in line with strategic direction and planning.
- 5) Assess the current contribution WAES makes to fulfil the wider City for All Vision and identify its potential to deliver increased impact through informing, shaping and supporting the delivery of the City Skills Framework and Economic Opportunity Strategy in relation to adult skills.
- 6) Assess the effectiveness of links with other City Council services/departments, the wider Adult Skills provider community, and other strategic and commercial partners in order to derive maximum benefit to adult learners in Westminster and the local community.

The review team structured its evidence collection around the following key lines of enquiry:

- How WAES has delivered on the previous Strategic Plan
- Progress made since the last review (2016)
- Strategic Leadership
- Operational Effectiveness
- Policy & Provision
- Impact & Outcomes

The review entailed an intensive period of fieldwork between 14th May and 14th June comprising interviews and focus group meetings with a wide range of WAES staff, WCC colleagues, external partners and learners. This included a secondary review of 25 key documents, interviews with 31 review contributors, 2 focus groups of learners and a survey to all Governors. Emerging findings and recommended areas to explore from the review process were shared with the WAES Governing Body and Executive Board at a Board meeting in July and their feedback used to finalise the evidence base.

5. Key Findings

Strategic Alignment

The 'WAES Forward 2019-2022' Strategic Plan, which was signed off by the Cabinet Member in May this year, centres around three key lifelong learning themes: Careers, Community and Culture. It is set in the context of the WCC 'City for All' Strategy 'Working with you to build a City for All'. The Strategy states that: 'Westminster City Council believes in creating a 'City for All' where people are born into a supportive and safe environment, grow and learn throughout their lives, build fantastic careers in world-leading industries, have access to high quality, affordable homes and retire into the community with dignity and pride.' This overarching vision has provided WAES with the context within which to develop a career-focused strategic plan which also recognises the vital contribution adult education can make to the community and cultural life of Westminster residents. A supplementary document providing a narrative to WAES' current contribution to 'City for All' is a useful indicator of the future potential of WAES's contribution to WCC priorities.

The 'WAES Forward 2019-2022' Strategic Plan is aligned to the Mayor's Strategy through its support for people into better jobs, but also recognising the wider benefits of learning to a person's health and wellbeing, confidence and ability to participate in society. In May this year, the Mayor's office followed up on the 'Skills for Londoners' Strategy with a consultation document to establish an integrated skills and employment offer for the capital. In Autumn 2019, the London Mayor will set out

how London government, business and providers can work together to build on and deliver on London's vision for skills and employment as set out in Skills for Londoners Strategy. This will provide the basis for the people section of London's Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) and make the case to government for further devolution of skills and employment funding and responsibilities to London.

Effective Management & Planning

The WAES Executive Board comprises individuals with a wide range of experience and expertise; with the recent appointment of two colleagues from the FE sector it offers a strong blend between those with extensive experience in the world of Adult and Community Learning and those that bring a Further Education perspective.

WAES has an Annual Business Calendar in place for the academic year, supported by an Annual Business Plan and both of these plans are regularly reviewed by senior managers. WAES prepares annual curriculum plans that Governors agree through the Performance Review Committee and Board meetings.

The Strategic Review coincided with a staffing restructure aimed at supporting WAES to deliver the new vision outlined in the '*WAES Forward*' Strategic Plan. During the review managers expressed a view that the staffing restructure had been welcomed and attributed this to the professional objectivity of the staff and the timely and responsive implementation of the changes. In part, managers recognise that to a certain extent, the recent staffing restructure was responding to the staff's widespread recognition that things needed to change. It was recognised for example that the previous support services and curriculum management were organised with fragmented reporting lines, being dispersed across four different parts of the organisation. This resulted in 'silo' working and dealing with things in an isolated way rather than looking across the range and taking a total organisational approach. Also, the absence of consistent administrative support across the organisation led to a continual need to shift resources between teams and this was often met with resistance where staff had built up allegiances with their immediate working colleagues. The new management structure has been in place since September 2019 to enable the delivery of the Service's refreshed and refocused priorities, as well as supporting, where appropriate, a drive to encourage the delegation of decision making and increased empowerment of WAES staff at all levels.

WAES managers have remained robust in their approach to change management through the early transition phase. They recognise the importance of seeing the changes through and demonstrating that delivering transformational improvements are the principal drivers for the reorganisation, which was not linked to any specific financial pressures. WAES managers are committed to ensuring change management processes are monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure effectiveness and impact is achieving during the implementation and embedding stages.

As part of the recent restructure WAES is introducing clear career pathways for their own staff in order to help address succession planning issues and to encourage staff at all levels to build a career within the organisation. This is helping staff to understand where the opportunities may be in the future and where they have the potential to progress. Supporting internal progression is important in encouraging the talent retention of experienced and able staff. To develop its talent management and succession planning approach senior managers recognise there is a need to develop a 'Talent Management Strategy' covering recruitment, retention and succession planning. They also recognise the need to invest in developing the Leadership and Management capabilities of staff at certain levels who have the potential to become the leaders and managers of the future. The City Council's People Services Directorate has a key role in working with the WAES senior team to undertake this work.

Sound Financial Management

At WAES, a robust budget planning and monitoring process is in place within the senior management structure. The WAES budget is subject to regular scrutiny by the Governors Resources Committee and there is evidence that where financial issues are identified, swift and comprehensive action is taken to mitigate against any significant in-year budget variations. The operational working arrangements are meeting all the WCC requirements and WAES are seen as being agile, responsive and effective in responding to WCC policy changes, requests for information and procedural changes. The WCC Finance Team have a high level of confidence in the current WAES financial reporting arrangements with the Governing Body providing an in depth 'check and balance' on a regular basis during the year. A confidence, transparency and trust has been established that augurs well for the future.

WAES is not core funded and does not receive any direct funding from WCC budgets. The vast majority of WAES income is generated through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Adult Education Budget (AEB), which has recently been devolved to the Greater London Authority (GLA). A significantly smaller proportion is via the ESFA for a handful of 16-18 learners, traineeships and as an Employer Provider delivering WCC Apprenticeships, funded through the Apprenticeship Levy. The Service has returned a budgetary surplus for three consecutive years and this has been invested in service infrastructure e.g. new IT equipment, improvement of centres, as well as topping up reserves, which is recommended good practice in the sector. The 2019-20 budget planning is currently predicting a smaller, but still reasonable surplus for the financial year. The pressure of new funding entitlements for low paid workers and the continuing issues resulting from the Apprenticeship funding changes will continue to present challenges for the senior management team. WAES has consistently achieved the ESFA Adult Education Budget grant allocation for the last 3 years. Non-ESFA income including full fee provision, and others has reached the £1m mark, which is just above 12% of ESFA Grant Income.

Income streams have diversified to increase flexibilities and ensure business viability and meet the demand of the local community. Securing and delivering external funding has been largely successful, with the proportion of bids secured being higher than the sector average of approximately 1 in 5. There are currently a number of bids in the pipeline awaiting outcome. Targets on additional income generation are now embedded within the WAES approach to the annual Curriculum Plan. Such targets have been included for each of the last three years. The Service is also attempting to grow self-funded programmes for leisure or personal development, as this is a growth opportunity for the Service to target those with high levels of disposable income within sections of the resident and workplace economy. The WAES Curriculum Plan for full cost course provision has generated over £390k during 2018-19, which is approximately 46% of the aspirational target of £840K. With the need to diversify income away from dependency on AEB funding, this is an important area for future strategic growth.

Effective Partnerships

WAES are currently working with the Lifelong Learning London Central (LLLC) group of Local Authority Adult Education providers to identify different ways of working and increased collaboration between boroughs to better align adult education delivery with the needs of central London on the themes of Work & Employment, Health & Wellbeing and Social Integration. Within Central London there is a confidence that WAES could play a significant role in supporting the development of this group and is well placed to fulfil a leadership role in shaping the future direction of adult education for Central London.

Whilst the majority of WAES Community Learning provision is directly delivered WAES has a proactive commissioning strategy that makes the best use of community learning providers and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations to meet the needs of residents facing barriers to learning and employment; often facing social isolation. WAES is considered by its delivery partners to be supportive and understanding, possessing high aspirations of its sub-

contractors and championing innovation and a commitment to quality. WAES is viewed as very accessible and genuinely helpful in working with community learning providers and VCS groups.

The Service's employer engagement activity has focussed on repeat business from existing employers. Increasing the number of new employers that it works in partnership with to deliver priority sector provision that meet the needs of Westminster residents and workers, has been highlighted as a priority in the new Strategic Plan.

High Quality Provision

The Service was rated Good by Ofsted at its last inspection (March 2016) and the vast majority of lessons are Good or Outstanding, as the Service strives to become an Outstanding provider. Successful on-site nursery provision at Lisson Grove and Pimlico centres, which supports learners and removes the lack of childcare as a barrier to learning, is also Ofsted-rated Good. The Service has achieved year on year increases in learner achievement rates. It regularly exceeds national averages, in some cases by a considerable distance.

The Service continues to achieve high learner satisfaction ratings from the Department for Education's national surveys, exceeding national benchmarks for each aspect and significantly higher compared to the General Further Education colleges in the area. An impressive 95% of learners would recommend WAES compared to a national benchmark of 82%. WAES' own end of course evaluations (based on over 1100 responses in 2017/18) found that 94% feel they attained their overall learning goal. All responses from learners range between 4.15 and 4.81 (out of 5) for all questions. Respect and fairness from my teachers (4.81) was the highest score of all questions. Overall learners scored their learning experience at WAES at 4.58 out of 5.

WAES has built up specialisms in key curriculum areas including: ESOL, provision for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, Community and Family Learning, Creative and Vocational curriculum and employability. ESOL continues to be a major part of the offer and is the largest provision in WAES. Beyond this, Creative Industries is the biggest strength of WAES.

A large majority of learners have a positive destination. 71.5% of learners for which destination data was obtained had progressed into employment, FE or Higher Education (HE). For Apprentices, 72.6% of learners achieved a positive destination: employment, FE or HE. 95.83% of those entering employment have sustained employment. WAES aims to increase the percentage of learners with a positive destination by 5% in 2018/19.

The Service has made great strides in embedding an employability focus for all curriculum areas and a highly effective strategy for the delivery of Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and emphasis on progression. WAES CEIAG services are in the process of rolling out an Adult Programme which will have two distinct routes:

- 1) The **Adult Career Plan** looks at the needs of the individual and structures a progression route to a chosen career. This will include access to wider upskilling qualifications which can be gained online to support adults who require flexible and agile access to learning. This will also include the learner's routes through to the high levels required in English Language, maths and digital literacy essential to securing employment. Each learner following this would undertake a skills-based diagnostics assessment and associated additional learning support requirements. Each learner will then reflect on the attributes, traits and experiences they bring to the start of their journey. They will set themselves 'character development goals' moving them forward to develop skills required in the workforce such as grit, resilience, curiosity, reflection and determination.
- 2) The **Adult Cultural Life and Wellbeing Plan** looks at the needs of the individual through a different but no less significant lens. This route will consider the learner's aspirations, which are significantly diverse but might include by way of an example:
 - An elderly person who might be looking to reduce personal isolation

- A professional in a high-pressured role seeking to experience and achieve well-being through the development of new skills in the Arts and Humanities
- A lone parent engaging with their community, and learning work skills through family learning'

An inclusive learning offer

WAES learners represent all backgrounds. The majority of learners are female, which is not unusual for the Adult & Community Learning sector. The changing residential landscape of learner movement in and out of the City of Westminster, coupled with many new residents being new to the country, presents WAES with complex learner demand to navigate.

The proportion of learners with a BAME background has increased by 6% in the last year. WAES has a target to narrow the achievement gap between BAME learners, particularly those of African origin, to be within 3-5% of the WAES average in 2018/19. A Service-wide campaign aims to raise staff awareness of the achievement gaps and Term 1 achievement was 86%, which demonstrates a 16% improvement.

The WAES learner profile by age has been in a steady state for the last three years. Learners aged 16-19 and under 16s form a very small proportion of the Service's cohort. 89% of WAES learners are aged 20-59, which is attributable to the majority of the offer focussing on reskilling and upskilling adults for employment. 13% of the cohort is aged 60+. The oldest learner is 96 years old and 262 learners are over the age of 80 years old. They study a wide range of courses, from programmes for personal development and leisure to qualifications and learning a new skill. The programmes help to reduce isolation and promote social integration.

There has been an increase in learners with a higher level need. 9.3% of WAES learners have recorded that they have a Learning Difficulty, this needs to be considered alongside the 120 learners with a Learning Difficulty and, or Disability (LDD) accessing learning annually at WAES. The majority of LDD learners are now from Westminster, whereas in the past they have been from outside the borough. Learners with a learning difficulty or disability showed 5.2% higher achievement than learners without a declared difficulty or disability, which is 7.2% above the national benchmark. LDD achievement is considerably (10%) above the national average.

Local Authority ACL USP is around access and inclusion. Especially as increasingly they are seeing more vulnerable learners using their services. With an ever-widening gap in levels of social mobility, an aspect of their work is providing a framework to give this cohort of learners the opportunity to progress.

Providing a fully-inclusive approach to engaging learners from all sections of the community is a central tacit of the WAES raison d'être, supporting the community to actively participate in society, build skills and confidence, combat isolation and improve their health and well-being. WAES offers an inclusive portfolio based on Family and Community Learning which focuses on the hardest-to-reach learners. In the last three years, WAES have provided learning services to support 700 adults who have been at risk of becoming homeless or declared themselves as homeless. WAES guarantees all Westminster Looked After Children a place on a high-quality Traineeship Programme.

Local Impact

WAES are delivering real life impacts for learners. As part of this review two focus groups were held with learners. Learners reported that their experience at WAES enabled them to:

- Communicate and advocate for them to express needs and access services (particularly in the case of English as a second language speakers and other vulnerable learners)
- get away from other life issues
- devote time to something enjoyable
- overcome social anxiety

- improve their mental wellbeing
- feel happy and fulfilled doing the course even if they're not currently working
- learn a lot of new things, including what it's like to live in Britain, even though they've been living here for many years
- develop skills and take them to the next level
- make friends
- benefit from substantially increased confidence which has had a huge impact on their lives
- learn what their rights are
- learn what support organisations are available to them
- apply for jobs and prepare for job interviews
- explore enterprise
- seek advice/support to address issues at work and other setbacks – WAES is very supportive in overcoming bad experiences

It is recognised that innovative methods for engaging learners beyond their time in learning (longitudinal) are required in order to be able to assess the wider impacts of learning, as well as the spin-off impact on communities. The Service is involved in work regionally and sub-regionally to identify innovative methods for engaging learners beyond their time in learning and develop an appropriate system of measuring impact.

WAES feel well established within the community and engagement is strong with residential groups. However, due to its geographical location in the heart of London and the large number of people travelling into the city to work, WAES recruits an even balance between Westminster residents and non-residents. Strategies are in place to incrementally adjust the current balance, with an emphasis on recruiting Westminster residents furthest from the workplace and/or those socially isolated. This activity will be complemented through the continued development of full cost recovery 'Cultural' provision, which is enriching the quality of life of the city's working population or more wealthy residents through a rich programme of creative and innovative personal interest type courses. The income generated through these programmes can then be invested in supporting other areas of activity. For the same reasons, it is important to maintain the option of recruiting non-Westminster residents who either work in the city or live elsewhere in London but are attracted by the appeal of the WAES offer and similarly will be contributing to the overall budget. It is suggested that the Executive Board develop a proposal for Governor approval that incrementally moves the current 50/50 ratio towards one that emphasises a proportional increase in favour of Westminster residents. 81% of the Westminster based learners enrolled with WAES live in the city's most deprived wards. For the academic year 2018/19 this equates to 4,500 enrolments.

Curriculum Areas	% of enrolments from Westminster deprived areas
Family Learning	87%
Learning Disabilities & Difficulties	89%
Basic Skills	84%
Graphics	81%
Make-up	82%

Wards	% of enrolments
Church Street	15%
Westbourne	9%
Harrow Road	7%
Churchill	7%

Potential for Increased Collaboration

The recently published 'WAES Forward 2019-2022' Strategic Plan, along with the upcoming refresh of 'City for All', underpinned by the development of three new Council-wide Strategic Programmes around 'Thriving Communities', 'Smarter City' and 'Greener, Cleaner, safer', creates the impetus to identify and capitalise on the synergy between and complementary nature of these strategies/plans and provide a vehicle for WAES to engage directly and increase collaboration with other teams.

The introduction of Adult Career plans and Cultural Life and Wellbeing plans for WAES learners provides a tangible vehicle for demonstrating and capturing the impact WAES can make for residents and businesses across Westminster through an emphasis on building careers and meeting skills needs whilst recognising the vital contribution adult education can make to the community and cultural life of Westminster residents.

It is pleasing to note that the general awareness of WAES and the work they do is improving, although specifically understanding that WAES is a WCC service is not widespread across the City Council. During the course of the review, some colleagues were under the impression that WAES had either been established by the City Council as a subsidiary and separate legal entity or was an external training provider, a charity/VCS partner to the City Council. Despite this lack of understanding, a common theme emerging from the review has been a willingness from other WCC services to work more closely with WAES as it is acknowledged that more impact could be achieved through increased collaboration and closer integration. A continued focus on this is considered mutually beneficial with all concerned expressing a genuine commitment and enthusiasm to developing these relationships further in the future. A review of this nature often presents an opportunity to raise the profile of a specific service area and strengthen working relationships. Around a dozen opportunities for increased collaboration were identified during the review process.

6. Three Key Strategic Challenges

Clarity of relationship, roles/responsibilities between WAES Governing Body and Westminster City Council political and senior leadership.

Local Authority Adult & Community Learning Services have taken a variety of approaches to establishing effective governance arrangements. Westminster City Council has established a Governing Body model with delegated responsibility for the effective delivery of the ESFA contract. This model of governance is like that of a FE college, and has proved effective for WAES. The local authority is the named contract holder and, as such, is formally and ultimately responsible for the funding and outcomes identified in the contract. The Governing Body also fulfils a vital quality assurance role with WAES, to ensure Ofsted inspections remain good to outstanding, appropriate challenge is in place to ensure the curriculum is relevant in meeting local need, is delivered to a high quality and ensures the safety of learners at all times. This is particularly pertinent at the present time with the introduction of a revised Education Inspection Framework from September with a renewed emphasis of demonstrating the impact of the adult learning provision for individuals, employers and the community generally.

WAES has a well-established Governing Body that has been in place in excess of 15 years. The Governing Body operates in accordance with an Instrument of Governance and a scheme of financial management approved by WCC. These were last reviewed by the City Council and WAES in 2010, since which time there have been changes to the City Council and to legislation, specifically, the Education Act 2011, which has enabled FE colleges to tailor their Instruments and Articles to particular circumstances. In view of this, it is timely for WAES and the City Council to take advantage of such changes to refresh the required governance arrangements.

There is a recognition on both sides that the relationship, roles and responsibilities between WAES and WCC require clarification. The current confusion is leading to blurred lines of accountability and decision making. There is an acknowledgement this situation has evolved over a long period of time and this has allowed different cultures and ways of working to emerge. There is a perception in some cases that WAES is seen as a separate entity in its own right with the resulting challenge of

'blending' an educational institution with its own Governing Body with a democratically elected local authority. This misconception has also resulted in missed opportunities to maximise the impact and contribution WAES can make to wider WCC priorities, and in turn, the Service has not benefitted fully from being properly embedded at the heart of the City Council. A clear and precise delineation of responsibilities between the Governing Body and WCC is required. The difference in roles between the local authority and the Governing Body needs to be identified and articulated in a refreshed Memorandum of Understanding between WCC and the WAES Governing Body.

Clarity over future accommodation arrangements is both critical and urgent.

As part of the Church Street Regeneration Programme, WAES is going to have to relocate from their Lisson Grove site in the early 2020s (currently scheduled for 2021-23), and securing clarity over their future accommodation arrangements is both critical and urgent. There is now an urgent need for the WCC Corporate Property team to work with WAES to devise a three-year implementation plan for relocation to ensure a smooth transition and minimum business disruption. This needs to be strategically driven with a Senior Officer working closely with the Head of Service and Governing Body. Consideration should be given to the importance of business continuity and potential reputational damage if the accommodation process becomes overly disruptive for learners.

The City Council needs to work with WAES to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the Service as a result of the costs associated with accommodation transition. A recent development that has come out of the review process has been an offer of support from the Director of Regeneration & Economic Development to fund through the Church Street Regeneration Programme, additional capacity and relevant technical expertise by way of the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to represent WAES as client.

A further development resulting from the review process has been encouraging discussions between the Development Team and WAES about the Service having a presence in the proposed Health and Well-being Hub on the Lilestone Street site, which is one of the early proposals for the overall scheme. Whilst this does not provide a solution to WAES future accommodation needs, it nonetheless presents an opportunity for WAES to have a presence along with other front line services. This approach aligns with interest expressed by WAES in the concept of co-location with other council or community services branded (WAES @ xxxxxxx) in shared premises elsewhere in the borough where there is a complementary offer that would improve access for residents. The desirability of attracting 'High Street' footfall in conjunction with services like Employment, Housing or Public Health to engage with residents who have not previously heard of WAES, could be particularly effective.

Building financial resilience to provide long term financial sustainability as an outstanding service.

WAES operates in a challenging and ever-changing policy and funding landscape, requiring it to continually adapt its business model, financially diversify and develop new business. WAES is well-practiced in adapting to changes in the policy and funding landscape for adult skills however the current context of significant changes in funding policy, managing the implications of devolution and changes to the regulatory framework brings this into sharper focus. Two significant funding changes will potentially have an impact on WAES future Adult Education Budget income. The AEB was devolved from the ESFA to the GLA from August 2019 and there is a likelihood that changes to the current allocations will be introduced in 2021-22.

7. Recommendations

During the review process it was apparent that the most pressing matters to progress were those relating to the 3 Strategic Challenges facing WAES.

First and foremost, WCC and WAES have expressed that gaining clarity of relationship, roles and responsibilities between WAES Governing Body and Westminster City Council's political and senior leadership is fundamental. It is recommended that a joint working party is established comprising

representation from the WAES Governing Body, WAES Senior Managers, WCC Cabinet Member and WCC Senior Officers to explore and define the respective roles, responsibilities, and reporting procedures, internal and external audit requirements in relation to the Westminster Adult Education Service and ensure the updated MoU reflects the changes that have taken place in the City Council and the sector since the Education Act 2011.

Of paramount importance is the matter of gaining clarity over future accommodation arrangements. It is recommended that Corporate Property develop with WAES an overall accommodation strategy to ensure the long-term needs of the service are met and devise a three-year implementation plan for relocation to ensure a smooth transition and minimum business disruption. The first stage of this process would be to develop a clear vision regarding the future WAES accommodation needs across the whole city. The initial phase will involve clarifying what the future accommodation needs are, with a focus on community need and 'City for All' priorities. It is recommended that a Task and Finish Group comprising WAES, Corporate Property and the Development Team is formed to move this forward and that the opportunity to harness additional capacity and relevant technical expertise by way of the appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to represent WAES as client is pursued.

Absolutely integral will be a continued focus by WAES on building financial resilience to provide long-term financial sustainability as an outstanding service. Whilst financial diversification and new business development is by no means a new area of work for WAES, it is recommended that this work is formalised by way of Financial Diversification Strategy that seeks to deal with the impact of devolution of skills funding, and incrementally shifts WAES current dependency on ESFA/GLA AEB funding. This could be complemented by a Business Development Strategy aligned to the Strategic Plan, identifying opportunities for current provision to expand and new areas of business growth.

The review identified a number of recommended areas for exploration which have been proposed for consideration. Their appropriateness, deliverability and relative prioritisation will need to be assessed by WAES and WCC. These include a significant number of opportunities for WAES to work collaboratively with other council services/teams towards shared goals. Collaboration based on agreed shared priorities will be key to enabling WAES to leverage and harness the benefits of being part of the City Council in delivering on City for All priorities. It is recommended that a Steering Group with the relevant senior City Council officers and WAES should be established to drive and oversee the proposed collaborative projects. Using relevance/priority, deliverability and potential to deliver meaningful impact as guiding assessment criteria WAES are proposing to adopt the following 3 projects for collaboration with other services in year 1 as an early priority:

Collaborative Project	Description	Partner Services
The Westminster Offer for residents	Developing a shared vision with the Westminster Employment Service and Libraries of career enhancement and lifelong learning for all residents in the city and developing an added value, enhanced offer to residents who choose WAES as their learning provider.	Westminster Employment Service and Libraries
WAES Employer Advisory Group	WAES have a priority to build greater strategic alliances with employers. A vehicle for this will be the establishment of an Employer's Advisory Group which will undertake an advisory role to the WAES Governing Body. This group will provide insights, ideas and recommendations, endorse the curriculum growth strategy based on industry standards, facilitate industry-led curriculum innovation and advise on the future direction of employer engagement. It is acknowledged that a closer working relationship with the Business & Enterprise Team will support them to increase the number and range of employers that it works in partnership with.	Business & Enterprise Team

<p>Review of WCC Apprenticeship Strategy and a defined role for WAES in relation to future Apprenticeship delivery</p>	<p>The Apprenticeship market is becoming more competitive with many of the larger levy payers running their own Apprenticeship schemes. For WAES this has been compounded by the loss of the non-levy Apprenticeship contract. WAES has been working collaboratively with the WCC HR & OD Team for two years to deliver the In-Council Apprenticeship Programme. It is now timely to review these arrangements to help shape WAES and WCC's Apprenticeship Strategy in the future. Since engaging in Apprenticeship delivery with WCC WAES has developed new areas of Apprenticeship growth to support the needs of the Council. Within the context of financial viability, this growth could be enhanced further through a partnership model where WAES provides the 'pastoral; and 'core skills' element of the apprenticeship while engaging with specialist providers to deliver the technical aspect of the standard/framework. A 'wrap around' model of this nature minimises the need for significant infrastructure investment and allows WAES to focus on its core strengths in IAG, learner recruitment, engagement, initial assessment and ongoing support. As Apprenticeships is one of the limited areas of provision where growth is still possible it is important that the City Council works with WAES to define its role in relation to future Apprenticeship delivery.</p>	<p>HR & OD, Business & Enterprise Team</p>
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8. Next Steps

Following input from Committee a final formal Cabinet Member Report will be issued to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Education & Skills for consideration and approval.

9. Appendices

Not applicable

10. Background Papers

- WAES Strategic Review Evidence Base - Initial findings and recommended areas for exploration (August 2019)

If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers, please contact Haylea Asadi, Head of Business & Enterprise on Ext: 1842 or email hasadi@westminster.gov.uk