

Education Panel – 4 February 2016

Transcript of Item 5 – The Further Education Sector in London

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): This then brings us to our main item of business today, and I would just like to welcome our guests. Andrew Travers, Chief Executive London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution; Sir Frank McLoughlin Principal, City and Islington College; Mary Vine Morris Regional Director, Association of Colleges; Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX); Jack Morris OBE Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel and Michelle Cuomo Boorer Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority (GLA). Michelle, I know that you are accompanied by your colleague, and it is to do with age, but I have forgotten his name.

We know that the FE (Further Education) Sector is about to undergo a review of its roles and how performance and sustainability can be improved in the future. The panel welcomes this review and hopes this discussion can contribute to the debate on how best to ensure Londoners have the skills and qualification to engage fully with the London economy.

How is the FE Sector failing London's learners and workers currently? Surely we have to get an answer to that so that we can see what it is that needs fixing. Linked to that of course is really how is it failing employers?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): OK, thank you. I would not start from the premise that the sector is failing its various customers and stakeholders. I suppose the key, as far as I am concerned and in my involvement with this is how London Government, in the wider sense, and London employers could take an enhanced role in commissioning and working with the sector to deliver and improve. Whilst not accepting your premise that it is failing, of course there is more that can be done. Both from the point of view of meeting the needs of employers now and in the future, and there are skills gaps that are reported, but also making sure that as many Londoners as possible have access to the labour market and are able to make their way in the world, become independent and so on and so forth, particularly important in the context of welfare reform, which will start to hit people's disposable income.

The discussion that is going on at the moment is really twofold in that context. It is about devolution and whether London can secure and agree a devolution deal for skills with the Government. Alongside that really it is about how the area review process can be owned, I suppose, by all the London stakeholders to deliver an improved delivery sector for the commissioning that London aspires to take on.

In summary, it is about working with stakeholders on the area reviews, local government, councils, as well as the Mayor and the GLA are going to be heavily involved in the area review, working with the colleges in the FE Sector, but doing that with another eye on what we are trying to achieve through devolution, whereby London's provision will be ultimately, all being well, subject to agreement, be commissioned by London Government in the future.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): I also do not accept the failure part. There clearly are failings in the system but I want to hover up a bit and talk about how it sits overall. One of the

issues for me is we tend to look in a very segmented way, schools, colleges, then within colleges young people separate from adults and higher education (HE).

We have an obsession in our educational system with what I call route one, with the A-level routes. I suspect most people in this room did A-levels and went to university, that was the route they took. Even with the success of London schools - and London schools have been a huge success - I think the number of five A to Cs at English and maths dropped back a bit, I understand, I do not know, we have around 60%. That means 40% of young people did not get five A to Cs, including English and Maths. Therefore, what are their options? Most people want to do A-levels, whether they are ready to do them or not. The dropout rate for young people in the schools at A-levels is 25%. I think we are pointing people in the wrong way to think just of route one. Why would you not do A-levels? Your teachers are telling you to do A-levels, your parents want you to do A-level, you only ever hear about A-levels.

We then tend to flip between A-levels and apprenticeships, and apprenticeships in London are a minute reality for young people aged 16 - 18. I think the number is 3%. What is unknown, and perhaps we can come back to it later on in the conversation, is about the success, not the failure, of the vocational route for young people, full time in colleges where they can go on, on to level three and on to HE if they need. Not just as an advert for my college but last year we sent 1,560 students to university. The majority of those, 670, came through our vocational programmes, and particularly in the areas of applied sciences.

Where there is a big issue which we need to be supported in addressing links into work, to connect the pipeline between supply and demand around work. We have not got that right in London and we have not got it right in London for a very, very long time. You probably have to go back to the early 1970s to see a direct link between supply and demand in terms of the labour market, particularly for young people. For me, I would like to discuss more about the importance of signposting for young people something other than A-levels. I suspect a couple of Members are going to tell me that they did not do A-levels, which I am delighted to hear about. Some signposting outside A-levels and then the importance of vocation routes and directing people there.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Not a repeat, right, but try to do it from a different angle. If you were living in another country, or another big city in the world, and you were looking at the statistics of the London college system you would see it is probably one of the best in the world. I am confident to say that because, even Ofsted says that 84% of our colleges are good or outstanding. If you use that criteria you can then see, OK, right, well there is 16% and therefore we do need to do much better for those 16%, but not we must not go around using a very young person's word 'dissing' our FE system, because that is not true.

In my past roles I have had to greet many educational colleagues in government from other countries and they have always been very impressed with what they see in London. There is one thing about we do need to help the 40% who do not get a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), however we should not be thinking that the system fails.

My other bit of evidence to show that the system does not fail, London has become an incredible dynamic city in the last ten years, and part of that is down to the dynamism of the colleges and their responsiveness. When you actually look at the majority of jobs in London, yes we have got the City, yes we have got all the high-flying jobs. However, have always had a big service industry, a big hospitality industry, a big leisure and tourism industry. Those have been serviced well by our colleges, and although we have skills gaps that is an issue to be tackled and I do not think it should be blown up as the issue it often in.

The other thing you have to take on board in London is since 2009 the budget has decreased year-on-year. A lot of the standards have managed to remain or get better.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Sorry, can you confirm that? You are saying that with a decreased amount of funding you have evidence to show that that has not had an effect on the quality?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Yes. It has had an effect on the amount being offered and it has had an effect on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners and the number that can be educated. I think I am right, 80% of colleges in London are now good or outstanding. I do not think that was the number in 2008/09.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): OK, so you can see the improvements since 2008/09.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Yes.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Just to add to what colleagues have said, I would probably also agree. You will be pleased to know that I do not see a college sector that is failing in London. What I think people do point to, and rightly, is two particular issues in London, which do affect us and to which colleges can respond positively, and that is one around skills gaps, it has been mentioned already. We still have a position where there are too many vacancies. If you look at vacancies you can still see that there are too many high-skill vacancies that are not being filled across London, or are being filled by people importing talent, and that is something which I think we are well-positioned to be able to address.

The other aspect which I think is important is that since 92 colleges have been incorporated and operated very independently and very much responsive to their local community, I think what that has meant is that when you look at local colleges you will see their strategic plans, their intentions is very much about their local learners and residents. What we now no longer have is a picture for the whole of London. When we talk about wanting to grow a particular sector or a particular skills area, what we do not have is a specific strategy to be able to do that. We have lots of individual colleges each responding as best they can, using whatever resources they have, trying to make sure that they have the right capital infrastructure to do that, but you do not get the sort of plan that you might wish to have. That is what the opportunity now give us in terms of reviewing FE and saying, "So, how can we work more collaboratively to actually have an offer for London which tackles youth unemployment and skills gaps?"

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): As you know, I have a bit of a history with further education in that I was for 22 years a governor and for 18 years as Chair of Governors of City & Islington College, the college that [Sir] Frank [McLoughlin] leads, but also I am a London employer, so I have seen this thing through two perspectives really.

I do not also accept that further education is a poor system. I think there are always cases in any education system where there is excellent and very, very good provision and sometimes there is provision that can be improved. Generally speaking, I think, FE does a great job for London. It is worth recognising also that it does a job, which we may touch on later in our discussions, it does a very important remedial job, where sometimes people have come through the education system and not necessarily taken the correct pathway, not necessarily taken the correct courses and need help in making that connect through to the world of work and upskilling them to be able to participate in the economy.

A few other observations I would make, if you are talking about what the challenges are and how we might think about improving it going forward. I think there are really good examples in cases where employers have

been involved in the courses, the designs of the courses and, as Frank [McLoughlin] alluded to, a line of sight through to how that course is going to lead to employment they have been really successful. Where courses are more generic and are more formally structured perhaps sometimes they are less effective. Therefore, I think there is a big piece of work to do in engaging more and more employees in helping plan the pathways through into their own sectors.

There is an issue, which colleagues may want to comment around, around the funding system for FE, where at the moment, and we are going to maybe talk about this later on, it is not always completely aligned with maybe the economic objectives that we are trying to achieve for London, which is ultimately to get people into sustainable employment and progression.

The last point I would make going forward is around the need for really, really good information advice and guidance, so that people get on to the right courses, are given the right independent advice. It is a piece of work the London Enterprise Panel (LEP) has been involved with, and I personally have been involved with, in the secondary sector up to age 19. FE actually, in my experience, does a good piece of work around careers advice, but this role in actually making sure that people do not go into the wrong courses and failing the process, and get the outcomes we would all like to see, is vitally important in running a successful system.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager – Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): Right, when I am the last one it is hard to add to that. One of the things from a GLA perspective is that we think we should be celebrating the success of our colleges in London. They offer a fantastic alternative to other types of provision. The diversity within colleges is fantastic. The AFC have given me some stats around 44% of London college students are from an ethnic minority background. That is something we should be celebrating. The sector is not one that is failing. There are elements, as colleagues around the table have said, that need to be improved but in general we should be celebrating our successes and actually recognising the incredibly challenging system that is in place in London in which colleges have to perform various roles. They do not have one remit. They work across a number of different areas from employer engagement to community cohesion and working with learners with disabilities. It is not a single stream of education that they offer.

We need to recognise the complexity of London, which is vastly different to anywhere else in the United Kingdom. We talk about the number of colleges we have in London, we have 50, that is a huge number in comparison to our nearest city, which would probably be somewhere like Manchester, which I think has far fewer. The complexity of London, coupled with the complexity of the system, it is the greater deprivation perhaps in London that colleges are working very hard to address, so there is twofold. One is it is a really successful system from where I am sitting, there are things that need improvement. No one would challenge that things need improvement, particularly around perhaps employer engagement, and that is some of the work that we are talking about. In general, we have a great FE sector that we should be celebrating and working with to help us take it forward into the next phase, which we are talking about through area reviews and devolution.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): At one level none of us would disagree with what you said, it is just that in our day job we pick up what is happening to the 16% of the sector, if you like, so I am using that figure that you are talking about. That 16% an impact on a huge number of Londoners lives. I want to actually now just drill down a bit with you and can I say to Mary [Vine Morris], the FE Sector, it seems is doing extraordinary well at level two qualifications because there has been an increase in this level two qualification, but when we then read or hear from employers, they are saying they want level three. Why is that mismatch?

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Firstly you are responding really to a Government priority. The Government priority then in terms of an entitlement for people is level two and below. If you leave school without a level two equivalent, so you do not have your five GCSEs A - C then you are expected to continue. You have an entitlement to remain in learning until you are 18, for a start, and then you have an entitlement to learning up to that level two. There is a basic understanding that actually for anybody should be success in life that is the standard level of education you would hope.

One of the pieces of evidence that you were given was about the increase in the sector in terms of provision below level two and how the sector has increased that phenomenally over the last five years. Again, much of that actually is specifically in response to Government initiatives. Things like the introduction of the Study Programme, the introduction of a requirement for young people who have not got their English and maths at grade C to retake those exams in college. In our college sector at the moment we have thousands upon thousands, upon thousands - Frank [McLoughlin] will tell you just in his college how many thousands of young people retook their GCSE Maths and English, not once, not twice, but three times, because we have a system where we all value that you have to get it. Every employer says, "We want you to have English and Maths" yet we have young people who have struggled at school, found it impossible, still do not get trigonometry and however many times you are going to examine them they are going to struggle.

It is a system which is very sound because, actually, you do want those fundamentals. As I say, no one would argue with the importance of English and maths, but you need to work with those learns to take them, firstly up to that level, and then to progress from there. It is great that people have the ambitions to do level three. You cannot do A-levels equivalent if you do not have basic English, Maths and a good grasp of the English language.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Sue, I was interested in what you said, but let me say this to you: I go out and meet students at colleges across my three boroughs and so many of them, when I meet them in one part of the borough have come from the other end, sometimes, of the borough. They have done that because they believe what is on offer around them is 'crap', is what they tell me - if we are going to 'diss', you know, go into the language of young people. It just feels to me that that is greater than the 16% and that if we were to look across London's boroughs there are FE institutions that are just not delivering the quality of education that young people want. Why do you think we have this perception and it is so high, when all of you have said that the garden is so wonderfully glorious?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): There is an interesting, I do not know, what you call it, socioeconomic behaviour pattern in London. Wherever you are you seem to want to go either to the borough above or the borough to the side for your education, and that starts even at primary school. If you live in Southwark you would often travel as far as Richmond for post 16 education.

A bit of that is myth, and people are not catching up, so parents and young people do not know that their local college has improved, and a bit of that is reality, because you are absolutely right. Although, I am proud that London has 84% of its colleges rated good or outstanding, I am as worried about that 16%. If you live in that borough and you do have to start travelling then that is a shame. I think that Frank [McLoughlin], as a college principal, would say his fellow colleagues are aware of that and they are trying to improve the situation. Also to be fair to Government the FE Commissioner's role that was brought in nearly three years ago was to tackle just that, to actually work with those individual colleges and say, "This is not good enough, you do need to improve the situation" and they are monitoring them. They came out this morning with Lewisham and Southwark, there is now an improvement and it is going forward to actually demonstrate that it can be good on the Ofsted criteria.

You are absolutely right, in some people's minds there is a problem, but that problem is sometimes myth, because in some areas of London you have the best colleges in the country, so they should go to them. The other part of this is what Jack [Morris OBE] was saying. If they have not got good careers advice, if they have not got good advice of where the best institutions are for their particular subject that they are interested in, then we will still carry on with this problem.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Just my last question to Jack. Again I think we would all agree with you about the necessity of good careers advice, but it is coming too later, is it not, for so many young people? Is this an area that the LEP can get into? Are there constraints? Should we be looking to encourage more involvement between the LEP and its structure with schools, so that we can get the careers advice at the right point?

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): Chair, we have and we are. Last June the LEP and the Skills Employment Working Group launched a document called *London Ambitions*, which was done in the living room [London Living Room, City Hall] here. It is a big piece of work, something we have been working on for a long time. It absolutely tackles what you are talking about. I cannot go through them now, but I would commend it to everybody here to read, if they have not done already. Basically what it does is it tackles exactly what you are talking about, which is it identifies the fact that in schools there is huge variation in terms of the careers advice they get, exposure to the world of work, employability experience. We have made seven key recommendations for how that might be adopted within all London secondary schools. Our report only goes up to age 19 in that context. We have also attached to it a curriculum that schools can follow in terms of fashioning their own response to it. I absolutely agree that whilst it is very, very important in the FE system for Information, Advice and Guidance to be robust and valuable. I actually believe and so does the LEP, that it really needs to be tackled in London schools. It is something that we are very much flying the flag for. We are actually just embarking soon on an implementation programme with a view to hopefully getting this adopted in every London school into the short term.

It is a big challenge but we absolutely believe that this whole issue about raising young people's awareness of the world of work, the skills they need for work, the careers that are available, getting them on the right courses, face-to-face personal advice that does not necessarily shoehorn them into the courses that may perhaps suit an institution rather than suit the student is critically important. The best answer I could give to that is I would ask you to look at that *London Ambitions* report, because we have really tackled the issues that you are questioning now and we intend to see them through.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Good. I have read it and the thing that came out there, and I do not know if you are working on it, was in terms of how as many Londoners can access that information and I think a portal was promised. I do not know where that is in development.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): It is certainly a work in progress but you are absolutely right. A key part of any successful system for careers needs to be the ability to portray where the jobs are. Not just now, but in five years' time and ten years' time what are the pathways into that. It is a work in progress, there is work that has been done. London Councils, in collaboration with the LEP, published a portal called Skills Match, which is part of it, but it is not as granular as it needs to be. We certainly signposted that as a key piece of work that we need to get into place but it is not there yet, because there is a lot of data to bring together to enable the users, whether it is a student, a careers adviser, a parent, or indeed employer, actually, that wants to understand how this works to go to a portal where they can understand, "How do I get into that career, what does it involve and what is the correct

pathway of qualifications and experience I need to get there?" Therefore, I absolutely take that point on board and it is in the report, but it is not there yet.

Tony Arbour AM: Just a brief question on funding. Is your essential problem not that there are a lot of other institutions eating your lunch, who are moving into the market that you have traditionally catered for? I am referring to entrepreneurial academies who are coming out and seeing the courses that you have been running in the past as fair game for themselves. We have been discussing this in the context of the budget that will be devolved to this institution, which is much lower in real terms than it is now. We were discussing the reasons for that and we think it is because in part you are losing your students to other institutions.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): My view on that is schools are eating each other's lunches.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): The competition is around A-level. None of these academies compete around vocational education and training or around apprenticeships, so they are competing on A-level. You are absolutely right, in my own view, there is a huge oversupply now of A-level in London and there is a huge problem about dropout. The dropout is 25% of students. Why would you not want to do A-level - everyone tells you to do it? If you look at the recent track record of some of the free schools and academies post 16 it is pretty poor. Some are excellent, some of it is pretty poor. They are not eating our lunches, FE colleges, because they are actually not providing vocational education and training, which is the mainstay of what we offer. We are back to this issue about route 1 and A-levels. It is all that people know.

We have an added problem in our system, a few of us might remember the raising of the school leaving age in the 1970s. The raising of the school leaving age in the 1970s meant you stay in school. The raising of the education age means you stay in education, and frankly most schools are delighted to get rid of the students who have not got their five A to Cs at GCSE and they do not take them on. The number of students progressing into schools, who do not have the five A to Cs, is not a school problem, suddenly it becomes an FE college problem, because colleges are taking these students on and then trying to work with them. I do not think the apportioning of blame there is particularly helpful one way or the other. They is a systemic issue. Is the system designed for everybody to get a C at GCSE maths and English? Personally I do not think it is. Back in the old days the GCSE pass was for a minority group.

To answer your question directly, they are not eating our lunch, they are eating each other's lunches. What we need to do is highlight and focus the vocational route B on people.

Tony Arbour AM: What I was driving at is, as far as we can see less money is coming into FE and that, in part, conceivably in whole is related to a declining number of students who are coming into FE. Part of the reason for that may be that courses that have traditionally been provided by your sector are being provided by these new players. What you are saying is they are not interested in the courses.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): I think you will find there is very, very little overlap in what the new entrance are providing post-16. The cuts, remember, in every colleges' budgets are overwhelmingly on the adult side. We have had a 40% cut in our adult budget, that is an absolute cut. That is not about competition, that is about the funding tap being turned off. My own college's income has gone from £52 million to £46 million in a very short period of time.

Where we do have an issue is the rate for a young person post-16 in colleges is a lower rate than in schools. We have been promised a level playing field for as long as I have been around. If we had a level playing field levelled up to school funding we would be very happy people in FE. It is going to be very interesting to see how that falls out at the moment. We have a lower rate and the cuts are largely hitting us around adults, which is a real issue actually about how few adults we can --

Tony Arbour AM: Are there other players that you have ignored? In your answer you are suggesting it is the academies and the free schools and so on. Are there commercial institutions who are taking contracts from Government to provide the sort of courses that you might traditionally have provided?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): In truth, for adults there are, so there are some training providers, not so much in London, in other parts of the country there are. There are some private providers offering apprenticeships for young people, although it is still very small numbers. The thing we have to focus on in London is a quality apprenticeship. And apprenticeship should be a job and not a one-year training course. In my own view, too many apprenticeships are not apprenticeships, they are on-year training programmes where somebody is back in the labour market at the end of that. Most of us tend to think, and people out there think, an apprenticeship is a job with training. In London we have to get back to insisting that an apprenticeship is a job with training and not just a training course.

Tony Arbour AM: Does anybody else have a view on that?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): To me there are two sets of issues with different problems. You have 16 - 18 and in London I would say the issue is not that you have private companies coming to do 16 - 18, but there has been the growth of sixth forms and, therefore, you have got something like over 240 sixth forms, so they have less than 100 young people in there. I would say you cannot give a proper offer to those young people. You cannot offer them a breadth of A-levels, you cannot give them all the extra-curricular things that you need with all small groups. They then are given a second issue, because they often drop out from those small Sixth Forms and appear at the college a year later.

We now have a new issue, because we want them to do a two-year course, but we are getting them a year later and, therefore, we do not have proper funding in that 19th year. There is an issue with 16 to 18 of there being too many places in London offering, there are too many places which are unable to do right by the young person. That does need to be tackled by somebody. When we get on to area reviews, to me it is a shame that the sixth forms were not involved. I can understand for pragmatic reasons why they are not in there but they do have an issue. If you track that back to the young person, and that is who I am thinking about through this, not the funding, the young person is not getting the proper offer.

Then with adults, and that is why I am here today to talk about adult education, and there is a shame that when Government has had to make decisions over the last ten years it has made the decision to prioritise young people on level two over adult work. Now in London we have different organisations, and I represent adult and community learning providers, who are normally very small and very local, often led and owned by a local authority and doing a fantastic job in communities, working with the most of the disadvantage. They rub along really well with the college, they see themselves as the progression route. I do not think anyone has worked it out for years, but there is a strategy around that. However the funding has been reduced in these areas, whether it is ESOL, whether it is basic literacy and numeracy, so we do have communities that are not well served.

Our adult population is going to grow in the next 20 or 30 years and I have a question mark over whether we are serving it right. Are we encouraging retraining? We cannot work until we are 69 in the job that we trained

for when we were 19, we just probably cannot, unless we are physical gods, or whatever. We need to make sure that retraining is actually thought about. We have an aging population. All the evidence shows that if we keep people in education they are less of a burden the state, they are less of a burden on health.

Tony Arbour AM: That is a long-term philosophical sort of case.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): It is all related to funding.

Tony Arbour AM: Yes, the case that you are making. The interesting point that you make, I do not speak for the Government of course, I think that the Government would say, to take the point about A-levels, "Isn't it good that there should be a range of providers - there should be a choice? People might, for reasons best known to themselves what to go to a small sixth form, because it is a continuation of what they know in their previous schools. But if, nearby, there was a college, like the sector which you represent, which has a wide range A-level subjects or a greater variety of courses than can be provided in sixth forms, is it not a good thing that young people should be given that choice?" Is it not?

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): The answer is yes absolutely. Of course it is. Students can have as much choice as they possibly can. Going back to what I said before, and I will not labour the point now, the really important thing is that it is excellent quality provision, they are aware of that provision and they are given good advice and independent personalised advice to make sure that they make the right choice about the course they go on to. Of course that all enhances a successful system if there is a freedom of good-quality choice out there.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): I totally agree choice is absolutely fundamental. Choice works best when there is sufficient funding to be able to afford over-supply, because you have to have more provision in more classrooms and more employers, etc. When you are relying on Government funding, which is diminishing so dramatically, then actually can we afford any longer to have the level of choice that does, as [Dr] Sue [Pember] referred to 200-odd schools with small, small Sixth Forms, that would not matter if they were really successful, but if those young people are not being successful getting a good learning experience then we cannot afford it from their point of view and we cannot afford it financially either.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Andrew, can you just clarify for us, in terms of local authority funding in this area? What levers do you have to pull from a local authority point of view?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): Local authority funding, as you all know, has been under a similar level of pressure, if not more than the FE Sector. In terms of direct funding the scope of local authorities is limited. There is a portion of the adult community learning component which does get spent by local authorities. As has been said, that is an important part of the system that will be included in some areas, if the providers opt in, in the area review, depending on whether they opt in or not. Therefore, having an overview is important.

I just want to come back to a point that was raised, and it is a funding point also, which is about the various elements of this. The adult skills funding that comes from Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) the Sixth Form 16 - 19 provision, which comes from the Education Funding Agency (EFA), of course this is pointless being made, but this is all part of the same system and the relationship between A-levels and vocational provision, have we got that right. This is something that we have raised in the discussions devolution. I think for all of us it would be best if London was able to have a commissioning overview of all of those funding streams and, therefore, the whole system.

The difficulty, of course, is that the Department for Education (DfE) is not known for its devolutionary tendencies, so they have said no to devolution, but they have offered influence over those policies in London. You might say, "Well, what does 'influence' mean?" maybe nothing. It is probably something we ought to hold on to because if we can develop a relationship where we have devolution of the BIS money and we do have some genuine influence over EFA policies for London then we can start to make the linkages that can make the system work better. Of course the education part of the system has fared better in the funding discussions up to now, and it would be better if we could have an overview and a commissioned approach which involved both of those key funding streams in London. We will continue to argue for that in the discussions with the DfE.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Hook back up the discussions around FE resources with education?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): Yes.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, OK.

Andrew Dismore AM: Just coming back to something that [Sir] Frank [McLoughlin] said about the dropout rates, you talked about 25%, is that A-levels?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes.

Andrew Dismore AM: We know the dropout rate at universities is also worse than the rest of the country at six point something percent.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes, 16% or something.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes, 6.3%. What about FE colleges, what is the dropout level in colleges?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes, and I am not just trying to say everything is perfect in our garden, it is not. One of the issues at A-levels is, for all the reasons I have said, you would want to do A-levels. London schools have proved to be fantastically successful at getting young people over the line with five A to Cs at GCSE. They then think, why would they not, "I can do A-levels, I've got five A to Cs including English and maths at GCSE". The possession of that group of GCSEs does not necessarily equip you to do academic study at level three. They are going on to the programmes and they are finding --

Andrew Dismore AM: I am asking about FE colleges and what your dropout rate is.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): I will not take too long, I will get to my point about FE colleges. Many of our most successful students come to us who are drop out from A-levels. We reopened engineering in my own college three years ago. A number of those student are students who did science, technology, engineering maths (STEM) AS levels, they were not successful, they dropped out. Four of those students last year went to University College London (UCL) to do engineering. That is the other thing about the distillation, people are unaware that with a vocational qualification at level three you can go on to the best course in London and beyond with that.

Retention on vocational courses in FE college is extremely high. Retention in my own college is 90% across our course offer. We have a measure called a success rate where we multiply our retention and achievement

and in colleges it is extremely high. We are atypical as a college, 80% of our students are studying at level three, they are not at level two, but there is a big need for level two. Retention in FE colleges is extremely high. As [Dr] Sue Pember said, the performance of FE colleges, again not defending them blindly, compared to American community colleges, for example, which I know extremely well, where the dropout rate is around 40%, I think we do very well in retention of young people and adult students in colleges.

It is something to do with finding the course that suits you. Suddenly you have had years and years of academic study, which has not always suited you. If you were doing work that is using your brain and your hands together, lots of people, including some of us, would probably find that was more fulfilling than just traditional academic education.

Andrew Dismore AM: If you are talking about level two, and this is a question for Jack really, we got the impression employers are much more into requiring level three. Is that right?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):

Yes. If you talk about London as a whole it is a very interesting statistic, which is that currently and going forward London is going to need, in terms of its employment demands, employees with level four plus, 50% having level four plus qualification. Conversely, the population has something like three low-skilled people for every one low-skilled vacancy. You have this huge gap to bridge in terms of bringing people up to be able to compete.

As an employer, I think the apprenticeship route, which we may talk about as we go on, is a really important piece of actually solving that puzzle. Certainly in our experience, nearly everybody in my particular company has either been brought through either a formal apprenticeship programme, or what I would call a sort of home-grown apprenticeship programme, which has been a combination of educating them on the job, training them on the job, qualifications where necessary. We have a company which has long-standing, very loyal, very committed staff who have been brought up in the culture of our organisation.

What colleagues have also been talking about here, which is the aspect where people have been pushed into courses that are not necessarily suitable for them, and are not necessarily tailor made for what employers need is something we really have to tackle when we look at how the new system performs, because it is not quite working yet.

Andrew Dismore AM: If we go on to funding in a bit more detail --

Darren Johnson AM: Sorry to interrupt. Could I just pick up Sir Frank [McLoughlin] on one point? Because I completely take what you are saying about young people being pushed into A-levels at the exclusion of other options. When I think back to myself, I did appallingly badly at an A-level. You would have probably had me going off to do an apprenticeship. It was mainly because I chose the wrong A-levels, I was not interested. A few years later I retook them and came out with a first class degree, but you would have had me doing an apprenticeship probably.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Not necessarily. I left school at 15 and I only did my A-levels when I was in my early 20s, so I do not think that is the case. What I am saying is that people are not aware of the choices. An apprenticeship may not have been right for you, it probably would not have been right for me in truth. When I left school in the 1970s there were two clear routes. A minority of people, about 7% went to university. Most people worked, and they either worked in work with training and

apprenticeship. Of course the big bit that is missing is many of us worked in unskilled reasonably well-paid jobs on building sites and in factories. That bit is largely gone. The issue, I think for us, educationally is will these students ever get to level three, numbers of them? I think they probably will not really, so what are the options around those? What do you do about the young person who is at level two? I definitely think steering them towards something which is practical in the hands on they may well become academic again. Some of our most successful students, they did not need to do the A-level like you, they have done one-year Access courses. We sent a student to medicine last year who came to the college with a GCSE in French. He was 29 years old, he had done loads of voluntary work in hospital, he had read loads of stuff and he actually got accepted to Southampton [University] to do it.

My point to support Jack's [Morris] is there is only an awareness of the A-level route. That is all people know. Career education has disappeared in schools, which is why Jack's [Morris] report is so important. You will have seen that the Secretary of State [Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP], quite correctly, has now instructed schools that they have to allow colleges and training providers in to tell the students about the alternatives, because frankly they do not let us in anymore, because they see colleges as competition for their own sixth forms. All schools what the sixth form, I can understand why. Students can make very costly mistakes by being driven down a route and then they come off that route and say, "I'm very happy doing this".

The key point here is not saying that colleges are brilliant. The key point is let us be clear about the options at 16. I would say, let us keep the options open at 18 or 19. Some of our most successful students now go on to very high-quality apprenticeships with City firms.

Darren Johnson AM: The adult education option is open later on as well, which is one of the points [Dr] [Sue] Pemberm made.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): A student goes to university, the university gets £9,000 fees. An access student who comes to us who needs an awful lot of support, we get about £4,200 to support that student, who needs massively more. We can all exchange anecdotes about children or nephews doing two hours a week in university. These students need an awful lot of support and we get £4,500. Sometimes if we just focus on route 1 we do not pay enough attention. Apprenticeships are not for everyone, A-levels are not for everyone, vocational route is not for everyone, but we should try to keep the three routes open so people know what the possibilities are for them.

Darren Johnson AM: Thank you.

Andrew Dismore AM: Getting back to the funding issue, which bits of FE have been the hardest hit and how have you dealt with the reduction in funding?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes, adult education has been hit both in the volume, so huge volume cuts, and in the rate per student. We have been hit in both respects on that.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): There is a third issue, is that for adults, well post 19, you are expected to take a loan out, so not only has the budget been cut, we then transfer the activity into loan activity.

Just to go back to Darren's [Johnson AM] point was that up until this year really, if you had wanted to repeat your A-levels because you took the wrong subject the state would pay, but it will not now, you will be expected to take out a loan for that. That is where advice and guidance at 16 is incredibly important, and that is why you cannot waste a year in any form of education that is going to be wrong for you, whether it is a small

Sixth Form or whether it is the wrong choice, because you are going to end up paying, and that is what individuals now need to know.

Back to your question: which has taken the hardest cuts? Adult education for what we would have called in the old days 'leisure or pleasure' which actually then has an impact that people did foresee on mental health issues, there is not places for people to go. There is also an integration problem with that and there is also an inclusion problem with that. In London it has probably hit us worse than other parts of the country, other major cities. They have a large group of ethnic minorities, or migrants, that need to be integrated.

Andrew Dismore AM: ESOL training, yes.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Yes, not just ESOL training. If you need to learn the language you are also then excluded from learning the skill, because you need both at the same time. That bit of activity, a large part of that activity we used to have, we do not have anymore. However, what is exciting about the next stage of devolution, you can prioritise that, and I would be recommending to you that you prioritise it so that London pays, or the taxpayer pays. However, there are ways to have infrastructure and for other activities make people pay themselves, so it is co-funded witness the individual. We need to look at different ways of funding in the future.

Andrew Dismore AM: How have you coped with the reduction, or how have you dealt with the reduction in funding?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Yes, we do all the traditional down-sizing thing that any business would do.

Andrew Dismore AM: Just cuts?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): We make staff voluntarily redundant and we have managed to do it in my own college through voluntary means all the way through. Some colleges have had to make people compulsorily redundant. I have heard of colleges in London having to mortgage buildings to pay redundancy fees. We look at our estate to see if we can downsize the estate. We also then, like any other business, look for opportunities to grow: so more work with employers, whether we can do international work, growing our HE offer. It is tough, so we try to do both of those things. It is a risky game in FE at the moment. It is on a £46 million income this year. We are hoping to produce a £300,000 surplus to reinvest in our business. That is my pledge, £300,000 on £46 million.

One of the issue for all of us, people who live in London, is the lowest level work has the lowest levels of income for an organisation. There is no status attached to it, people are berated for doing it, so why would you do it? If you could avoid doing it you would probably avoid doing it, except that we are not in this for the money alone, we are in it because of the educational purpose. I think London needs to applaud those people who are picking up, let us be blunt, young people who have been failed by the school system, 11 years and do not come out with the requisite qualifications. They then come to colleges. Rather than berate colleges for doing that, I think colleges need some support. Colleges like my own are fine really, because we do loads of high-level work and we have a lot of profile, loads of students going to Oxford and Cambridge and UCL and wherever.

The colleges who have lower level provision, who are struggling, need the support of this Assembly and others to recognise the huge work they are doing in London. Let us not be like some other countries who will not teach English to the parents of immigrant children. We have Afghani mothers in my own college who are

illiterate in their own native tongue. What is their journey to become a level two student? Many, many, many years, but it is critically important work for social cohesion. In a sense, one of our problems as colleges is that we do a bit of everything, but actually somebody has to do some of that.

The main thing we should be doing is focussed around employment and jobs, because every student who come into my college ultimately wants a job. Our focus is to say, "Do this, do that and we will steer you towards work".

Andrew Dismore AM: You are saying you effectively pick up the pieces from the school system. Is the answer that not what you were saying earlier on? I think this is the point that Tony [Arbour AM] was making: you are to a degree in competition with schools, so how do you go around actually increasing your student numbers in the light of that competition and effectively getting out of this question of people succeeding at GCSE but failing at A-level, because then they would not be failing at all.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): For me that is absolutely fine. If they all get their GCSEs and we do not need to do the remedial work in colleges that is absolutely fine. What we should then be doing is supporting those students to be successful at level three, whether it is the academic route to level three or the vocational route to level three, or they are doing an apprenticeship and coming to college to support with that element of that. We are delighted, in Islington when I became the Principal of the Collage, five A to Cs including English and maths was 26%. Two years ago it was 64%, so that is why we have so many level three students, because the schools have been a fantastic success.

I know, Jennette [Arnold AM] you want to come back later but I think the area review has the opportunity for us to have more systemic joined-up thinking around FE, rather than just 50 institutions standing separately and competing, as they currently are.

Andrew Dismore AM: Mary, how do you think you can go around increasing student numbers in the light of the competition?

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): The offer has to be attractive to young people. Young people have to have an ambition for what they want to do in life. That in part goes back to the issue of guidance. We take the same sort of pragmatic view of it. It does not really matter where a young person learns, provided they are successful. If they are in school that is absolutely fine. It gives them time to grow up, it gives them time to mature. So, providing they are successful it is absolutely fine. We are not trying to say we want to drag young people, guide them at 16 to get them out of that damn school system. That is not it at all actually, they can be successful wherever. In fact, employers have increasingly moved away from wanting to employ 16 - 18 year olds. One of the reason apprenticeships are so low at 16 - 18 in London, is because employers generally prefer the slightly older learners.

In fact, if schools are successful with their learners then by all means stay there, grow up, that is fine, come to us when you are ready to take your next step. It is just those who are not being successful for whom they are continuing to have that circle of being unsuccessful then you are told you are unsuccessful and then you start to believe that you are not going to be successful ever. We do not need to compete in that sort of way. Some elements of competition, yes OK, they are helpful, they drive up quality. Some elements of competition that we have had over the last few years have been decidedly unhelpful in having a system for London which enables all those who are participating to be successful.

Andrew Dismore AM: This is a question for Andrew Travers. We have heard a bit about what Frank has been doing on trying to drum up more trade, as it were. What other innovative forms of thinking could there be to try to get more money into FE?

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Good question.

Andrew Dismore AM: If you had thought of it you would have done it.

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): The way to think about that is that we all know how much money there is going to be in the system in overall terms until 2020 because we have been told those numbers, and we know, whilst it might not have been as bad as the worst case scenarios, it is still going to be very difficult and tight. There is not more money in the system in total. The key that we would see is about getting more out of what we have, and that in turn is about trying to make sure that in London, because that is what we are concerned about, between the boroughs, the sub-regions and the Mayor and other stakeholders, in the context of devolution, that we can take the money that we have and use it better. That really is about linking the funding sources together.

At the moment when they come down from Government with a mandate to do X or Y that will not necessarily be the best way of applying them, and we think that if they come down to London Government and stakeholders that those funding sources can be looked at in the round and the outcomes can be commissioned in a better way, so that we get more from those resources. That is the way we can look at how we improve. In doing that we need to recognise that working with all the providers that are in the system, in a way which is collaborative but is also challenging, can also drive better outcomes. We have all said that the system is not failing, it is good, it is working well but it could work better. If we are commissioning in London we can try to collectively work out what the right levers are to drive that continued improvement. That is the benefit of having some form of devolution.

Andrew Dismore AM: A long trajectory on finance is, therefore, generally a downward spiral. Is this a case of managed decline, or is there other opportunities?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): We have ended up in this territory with a flat cash settlement. Yes, in real terms there is going to be a continued decline, certainly when you look at the growing population of London so, yes, per head there is going to be reduced funding. We do not tend to look at it in terms of managed decline because there are things we can do to manage and mitigate it so that it is not a decline and we can improve what is offered. That depends on, crucially, the collaboration we can have between the Mayor, individual boroughs, groups of boroughs and providers. We can put the different sources of funding together and get better results.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Andrew [Dismore AM] you would be wrong to think you can sweat the [FE] pound further because of the reduction. I do see it as a growth industry. I do not see it as a declining situation because what we have not done in London is make use of apprenticeships and the new levy that might come along. That is a growth area.

Andrew Dismore AM: It is what I was going to ask about next actually. What impact do you think the apprenticeship levy is going to have? It is a question for Jack [Morris] on employers and for you on FE. Is it going to be a drop in the ocean or is it going to actually make a real difference?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): It could make a real difference if it was badged properly, marketed properly, and targeted properly but people have got to put

some work behind it. Our big City colleagues will now have to pay the levy. I am pretty positive they want something for that. At the moment they do not do apprenticeships. It is pretty much a growth industry in London for that.

The second part is loans. I am meeting 19 to 40-year-olds all the time in London who say that they want to change career and they are not aware that there is a government loan to help them do that. That is another growth part.

I do agree, Andrew [Travers], that where you can make gains is, for example, troubled families. At the moment you have got a fund from the Cabinet Office, another fund from the Department for Communities and Local Government, and then you have got College Skills funding all trying to work with a troubled family. There must be a more efficient way of doing that. That is where the excitement of a plan for London should come, not trying to get more efficiencies. If a college could have made itself more efficient on doing backroom services it probably would have done it and they have already got plans in place anyway. There is a big new world out there but it should be a world of opportunity not back where we are.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): If I can pick up what will be called the Adult Education budget as we move through to devolution. One of the things we would really like support from the Assembly for this side of the election and moving forward is that there is not a real reduction in that budget. The budget, as it currently stands, is based on historic provision and what a college delivers. Moving forward we have been made aware that it is likely to move to a demand-based allocation. That could be a significant shift in London. What we are very concerned about, as officers and London government, is making sure that London does not lose out in real terms because of the way a national government articulates demand. We expect there to be about a £400 million budget as it currently stands.

We are waiting for central government colleagues to come forward with a funding methodology for 2017/18 which will move from historic allocations to a more demand-based allocation system. What we will be doing, as soon as we find out that methodology, is really rigorously testing it to make sure that London is not losing out in terms of the methodology that government is using. It would be very helpful for the Assembly to support that because it will affect all of our colleagues around the table.

Andrew Boff AM: I am sorry, I am not clear why we would lose out?

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): It depends on how national government articulates need. They have not articulated what they are defining as 'need'. It could be based on deprivation. It could be based on numbers of adults. It could be based on a number of areas. What we are very concerned about is that London potentially - depending on the different methodology that they use to calculate that - could potentially lose out. We are keeping a very, very close eye on what that methodology is and will be preparing - should it look like London is affected - to put forward counterproposals around that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): There is precedent, is there not, because the schools' funding formula changed. That then ended up with a disadvantage to London. That is the point.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): Yes, we are very keen that we do not lose out on this.

Andrew Dismore AM: It happens all the time. There is the row about the police formula.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes, thank you for that.

Andrew Dismore AM: Happens all the time. Just going back to the question about the apprenticeship levy, I was going to ask Jack what impact he thinks it is going to have for employers.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):

Generally speaking the apprenticeship levy is a good thing in the sense that it is raising awareness to all employers about the importance of apprenticeships and what they do. The challenge – across the country but particularly in London – is the fact that in London's economy there are probably a disproportionately higher number of small and medium sized employers (SMEs). Certainly in our experience in the LEP it is pretty challenging getting those very small employers to engage in apprenticeship programmes on two counts. It is generally selling the idea of it to them, as I portrayed in my own experience in my own company of selling that cultural and economic benefit of employing apprentices. There is also the financial issue for small employers. We ran a programme through the LEP where we enhanced the grant that was available to SMEs by doubling the grant from £1,500 – £3,000. It was targeted at SMEs taking on first time apprentices. It was very successful. We got a 35 – 40% uplift, or something like that. That funding came to an end.

In general terms we have just got to acknowledge that there will need to be a lot more effort put into getting SMEs to understand and buy into the idea of why an apprenticeship is good for them and getting them to engage in that. You might want to add to that Michelle [Cuomo Boorer]. That is the big challenge as I see it.

Andrew Dismore AM: They are not going to be paying the levy because they are small.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):

Quite. The large companies will do it anyway and do.

Andrew Dismore AM: Yes. Coming back to the original question, what difference is it going to make in terms of funding? Will it make much of a difference?

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): It will be hugely based on how it will be allowed to be used. In London there will be hundreds of millions of pounds generated across the river from the levy. The issue is back to how it will be allowed to be used. Will that just go into the national Exchequer and be used for something else. There will be clearly a disproportionately huge amount generated in London. Even in a small borough like Islington, if some of that money could be predicated, if someone tries to say, "Look, we are just going to take this as a tax and we will 'suck it up'". If that is the case could some of that money begin to be used as a pot to direct education and apprenticeship training in an area? The devil will be in the detail I suspect. We just do not know the detail yet.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. Now we are going to go on to area reviews. Before I do, let me just report to [Sir] Frank that *#weloveFE* have picked up on you and they are with you all the way, "More students to FEs instead of universities".

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Absolutely right. That is very good.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): In July 2015 the Government launched a national programme of area reviews of post-16 education and training institutions. When announcing it the Government stated that,

"The Government wants strong local areas and employers to take a leading role in a post-16 skill system that is responsive to local priorities."

Over to you, Jack, can you outline the status of the London area review at present?

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):
I might need a bit of help on that one, Chair.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): I want to start with you because of your role within the LEP. We can then go on to Michelle [Cuomo Boorer] and get her understanding of the role of the Mayor. Then both of you can share with us your understanding about the Pan-London steering group.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):
Indeed. I will probably need some help on answering this one from Mary [Vine Morris] and colleagues as well.

We are at an early stage. Our first meeting of the London Area Review Steering Group is on 29 February 2016 which, as you know, the Mayor will be chairing. I will be Co-Deputy Chairing, alongside Councillor Peter John [OBE, Executive Member for Children, Skills and Employment, London Councils] who is representing London Councils. I would say at the outset - without going into the machinery of all of this which colleagues can probably deal with better than I can - that I see this as an absolutely fantastic opportunity for London. Many issues which we have already been discussing are coming together now. It is receiving traction amongst the sector and the various different stakeholders. This is going to hopefully be seen as a moment in time where we have a real opportunity to do it better for London and get it right for London where it perhaps has not been working as well so far.

What I would like to touch on though are some views about what we are trying to achieve through this area review; what we are looking for, the qualities and elements of a successful system and what it would look like. It is one that has got to have high quality provision and high quality outcomes. It has got to have financial viability and robustness in its delivery. There is no question the sector has been weakened by the financial challenges faced by various different institutions and the change in the funding methodology. It has got to absolutely be responsive to London's current and future employers' and business sectoral needs. Also - as I highlighted - not only a careers piece of work but also we have got to look at the pipeline of industries emerging in London. They are not necessarily just sectoral, it is things like entrepreneurship. Many, many people are now setting up their own businesses. We have got to have a system that is much more responsive to London's economic job and business sectoral needs going into the future. As I have touched on before, careers information, information advice and guidance and the offer around that is really important. I also think it is important that what we end up with still maintains the entry and gateway level provision around things like ESOL, work with NEETs (young people Not in Education, Employment or Training) and around making sure that people with special learning needs and disabilities are not left aside by this process.

As a result of all that what we will probably look to achieve at the end of it is something which does build upon provision in London which excels in offering courses and specialisms with successful proven track records and successful employment outcomes. I have to say, by definition that also means we are going to have to be pretty challenging with courses that are not achieving those outcomes as well.

The last thing I would say in terms of what it might look like, it has got to be something which is accessible. What I mean by "accessible" is not just socially accessible. London is spread over a huge geographical area. There are 32 London boroughs. There are 50 or so colleges spread all over London. Whatever we come back with - and if we are going to go to a system which looks to place some restraints on what certain colleges offer

- we have to realise that travelling to learn patterns have got to be respected. If somebody is way down in the southernmost part of London and the only college to go to is one in the northernmost part of London we have got to think about how we get them there, or whether that provision is not best served locally.

There is quite a lot in all that, but in terms of the vision of what we might end up with that is certainly my view - and I think the LEP's view - of what we might be aiming to achieve. I am going to let others answer for some more specifics of how we are going to get there.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Before we do that, Jack, we had a really good meeting with representatives from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers. They have members across the sector. They are clearly, on behalf of their members, concerned because nothing is being said about the educators. You have just said, "There is the learner, there is the business, there is the growth of London". None of that can take place without the educators.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): I completely agree.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): What about the educators in this? I do not mean the ones in the outstanding area. I mean the ones that, for whatever reason, are in colleges delivering these courses that, as you say, do not necessarily at the moment deliver. Is that going to be part of what you are looking at?

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): It is probably quite important to understand that the area review is a national process that is relatively mechanistic. It is looking at provision. It is looking at college estates. It is looking towards rationalisation. It is looking towards perhaps specialisation in areas. It is very useful that the area reviews are taking place in London. It is a fantastic opportunity. We also have another opportunity running alongside that which is the devolution piece. We also did a little bit of work around yesterday with college principals and other stakeholders around the vision for London. The educator piece is absolutely embedded within that. It does not fit into the mechanistic programme that is an area review.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): It is good to hear that. We have heard about the pan-London steering group meeting shortly. Michelle, what specific role does the Mayor of London have? Can you be clear about this because I do not know that many of the candidates know that they are going to have responsibility for this area?

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): The area review, as I said, is a national process. It is a process that London government has broadly tried to shape. Some of the things we wanted in it we have been told are not in it.

It might be useful for you to understand the different tiers. London is slightly different in the area reviews in the sense that London is by far the biggest review area. It is probably double, if not larger, in size than any other review that will be taking place. London is slightly different in the fact that it will also have four sub-regional reviews. These sub-regional reviews are taking place in two waves, none of which have kicked off yet but there is a huge amount of work to get those started. The two reviews that will go first will be central and west. Their first steering groups happen in the first week in March 2016. They are straight after the pan-London group. Then the further two sub-regions, which are east and south, will kick off most likely in May 2016. They will be undertaking reviews on a sub-regional basis. The information and recommendations that they come up with on a sub-regional basis will be fed into the pan-London group. The pan-London group will take an overview of the recommendations that have come forward from those areas, both on supply and

demand side. That pan-London group has the responsibility of putting forward a set of recommendations that it would like to see taken forward by the sector. Does anyone want to chip in on that? Is that straightforward?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): A good summary.

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): Perfect.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): The pan-London group is a group of various people. It is quite a large group. It is chaired by the Mayor. We have business representatives and Jack [Morris OBE] is attending that. There are sub-regional chairs who are borough leaders.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): You can let us have it in a note afterwards.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): Yes. It has a wide range of stakeholders there. It will oversee the recommendations from the sub-regional reviews to provide a collective pan-London response.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): That was going to be my next question which you have answered very well. That it is fine to be pan-London at a meeting of hundreds but that does not necessarily work. I am glad to hear that you will then be looking from a sub-regional process as well.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): Yes. It is probably quite important to say that the sub-regional review areas are not fixed; for example, local authority boundaries that will remain throughout any future provision that we commission. They are agreed groupings of boroughs that will look at the provision in that area. One of the things we will need to overcome - which is why it is hugely important to have a pan-London steering group - is that many of our colleges will deliver not only within the boroughs that they are collected in but across boundaries so that information is also fed into other sub-regional reviews that are happening.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Yes. That is one of the issues about colleges who serve across boundaries. Again, if you could let us have that information, that would be useful to append to this piece of work.

Let us be clear, you have touched on the message from the Government. Is there anything specific that the current Mayor has added in terms of a Mayoral objective that he wanted to see out of this?

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): What we want to see from this is everything that Jack [Morris OBE] outlined. We want to make sure that there is a sustainable college system at the end of this. We want to make sure that provision that is offered in London is of high quality and is meeting the needs of London, the demand side. A lot of the data that is being fed into these reviews is demand side data which the GLA, working with local authority colleagues, is producing.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): It is also to make sure that the area reviews underpin the vision for London and so that order is the right way round.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): Yes, absolutely. The area reviews, for London in particular, will feed very strongly into the rounds of devolution that we are going through. It provides us really with an evidence base to move forward with commissioning of adult skills as we move forward.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): That is the real opportunity here. I was involved in some of the thinking around the area reviews. The Minister Nick Boles [The Rt. Honourable Nick Boles MP, Minister of State for Skills and Equalities] said that the era of the free market in colleges had done some very good stuff and done some serious damage in that there was a very uneven picture across the country and, in truth, a very uneven picture in London of winners and losers. If that continued ultimately the loser would be the students in that area. You could see that in parts of the country they would not have a college because the college would have lost out in that. Therefore in London we have got winners and losers. If it were just free market and were we just interested in that, City and Islington College would say, "Crack on because we have done extremely well". It is not in the best interests of all London learners as it currently sits.

What we have done very well, and very quickly, through the Mayor's Office and through the LEP, is to take the area review and seize the opportunity to overlay a vision on top of it for what we are trying to achieve. I think that is the part that has been missing in some other areas. They are just conducting area reviews as a means of sustaining themselves. In London we have seized the opportunity to say there is a vision and the potential for a system. We do not have a FE college system in London. We have got a series of individual colleges standing on their own. Here is an opportunity to have a joined up system which is in the best interest of learners.

I would suggest it is much more attractive for a learner to travel into our site at the Angel than our site at Finsbury Park. We just happen to have fantastic geography. Students love going to the Angel. When we did work about young people going to our Finsbury Park site at the time they were much more concerned and their parents were concerned. Back to a point you made earlier, Chair, there are some issues about geography where students say, "I do not want to go there. It is nothing to do with the college, that area has a reputation I do not want to go with." There could be some fantastic provision inside that college but it is the location. All of us need to put our shoulder behind trying to establish a vision here.

My hope would be that we get a Mayor of London talking about, "My colleges" and, "The benefits that my colleges in London come to leave a change". We will have won this debate when the Mayor not only knows that this is under him but comes back and says, "My colleges are critically important to change in London". You are looking at fantastic assets here at the disposal of us joining together, multibillion pound assets in the college sector to facilitate that change.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you. I know a London mayor who would say that: Mayor Robin Wales [Mayor of the London Borough of Newham] cannot stop saying enough wonderful things about Newham College because they are locked in this partnership. It seems to me the beneficiaries of that are the students of Newham. That is great for Newham College and Newham. I am talking to Andrew [Travers] where there is no match or even talking between boroughs and colleges and the colleges are isolated. I have to say I have spoken personally to some members of the management teams in colleges who are fearful. They see this, in where they are, as possibly they will be taken over and they will not feel the same link with their local borough, even though there is not a fixed relationship they identify with that area. Is this being fed through to you?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): Yes. There have been some concerns expressed through the process. For the vast majority local authority and college relationships are very good. Maybe there are one or two areas where that historically has

been less the case. Jack [Morris OBE] and Michelle [Cuomo Boorer] summed up very well the purpose of the area review. What I would also say is that this is a major opportunity to reconnect consistently between local authorities, other leaders in London and the college sector. Where there have been issues in the past this is a chance to move on and transcend those issues. Nobody that I have heard talk about this is trying to invent the structures that were there historically and that had a mixed record of success. People are trying to work here to create something different. It is about collaboration at the regional level and the sub-regional level, because a lot of this is a sub-regional discussion, and to move on to something different which is about commissioning provision in a collaborative way. It is a really big test actually for politicians in London at the regional and council level to get this right. If we can do that it will demonstrate to ourselves that we can do this better, and also demonstrate to government that a devolutionary solution more widely can work in London, so it is really important.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London

Authority): Can I just chip in there and support Andrew completely on that. What the sub-regional reviews will do - which the pan-London group will do in a slightly different way - is bring together the local authorities with the college providers. A lot of those colleges will be talking to their local authorities. You have described a really good relationship in Newham. For those areas where there is not perhaps that really close relationship the sub-regional reviews will be bringing all those parties together in the same room to discuss those issues. It is a really good opportunity to strengthen those links.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): You were asking at the beginning what the Mayor's role is in this. We have described the process. One of the most fundamental roles is with college governors because colleges are independent organisations. Therefore whatever the recommendations are it will be for the college governing board to agree them. That is a very important part of the discussion. It is key that colleges keep their independence for all sorts of reasons, financial and for the way they can then respond to the needs of London.

In Wales they had 30-plus colleges three years ago and now they have got 16. The difference is that it was not so much them coming together, but the biggest difference was when the Welsh Government said, "We want you to be our strategic partner for delivery". That new partnership and new ownership where the Minister for Wales gets up and talks about, "his colleges" - or "her colleges", as it is - has changed the behaviour and aspects of the whole dynamics. If we could get that in London so that the Mayor really does say, "These are my strategic partners and these are the people that I want to work with over education post-16 in London" then that would be a brilliant end to this review process.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Mary, do you fully agree with that? How does consolidation work for you?

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): I was going to also make the point about governance and governing bodies. That is a huge resource and strength within the sector. Jack [Morris OBE] referred to how many years he had put into governance, and many of the governors of colleges are employers, members of the community and really strong people giving huge amounts of non-executive time. There is a great force behind a sector in London that we need to take with us and utilise. [Dr] Sue's [Pember] comment about strategic partners is absolutely right.

There are other specific things we were talking about only yesterday in terms of visioning that we would look to a future mayor to perhaps help with. If we are able to have a dialogue where we could express the particular difficulties that the college sector finds itself in and things we think the Mayor has within his capability to do something about. We were talking yesterday about the importance of getting - it might not be the top of your

agenda but it is top of our agenda – people to teach English and maths. We talked about the sheer volume of it and the importance of key workers. Anything that the Mayor can do around housing for people who are poorly paid, and poorly resourced sometimes, to bring into that sort of sector specialism would be incredibly valuable. The comments [Sir] Frank [McLoughlin] made earlier on about wanting a workforce which is appreciated and valued, where the ethos of that workforce and the way it is valued is very high to make people want to work in the sector and think that is a good place to work, “I want to be there”. That is the kind of campaign that the Mayor can lead. We talked about adult learning loans. Who would be better at saying there is a good reason to invest in your future. We did it with apprenticeships. The current Mayor did some work around apprenticeships and raised the profile of that. There is still a lot to do in that area, but certainly adult learning loans would be another fantastic campaign. Getting employers to want to completely be on board is where the Mayor can add value too. Those big employers over there, they will listen to a future mayor, “You can persuade them. You can convince them.”

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): We have all got that job to do. This morning I was chairing a session for Policy Forum for London. The topic there was education and the challenges for London, employment, recruitment, retention; not just for newly qualified teachers but for the middle levels. If you do not keep your middle levels then you have this vacuum. You make too many demands on your entry level and then they leave. Then, of course, we have to recruit and train up deputies, heads of schools, executive heads or whoever.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Our leadership is ageing. I am not just talking about ourselves at the table.

Andrew Boff AM: I always ask this because there are appeals from all sorts of sectors to treat their staff as a priority with regard to housing. Who is not a priority? If you prioritise something implicitly you deprioritise somebody else.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Yes, I accept your point.

Andrew Boff AM: It is not only Russian oligarchs who are moving into London.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): We are not prioritising them.

Andrew Boff AM: No, we will not prioritise them.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): You can deprioritise those. It is a balance all the time, is it not? I am sure you will have gone around the circle on this discussion enough times.

Andrew Boff AM: A huge shortage for everyone.

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): Sufficient affordable housing for people on salaries that are reasonable. When you look at the sort of people that colleges are catering for, so many of the people who are attending colleges fall into those disadvantaged groups. We need to make sure that the staff who work with them are valued.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Another area where you and the Mayor can provide support is with the presence of employers – as Jack [Morris OBE] mentioned earlier – in the college, regardless of whether they are employing students or not, in the co-design and co-delivery of programmes. Busy employers may be able to release staff. For example, for a marketing module on a business studies course I am sure there are lots of companies who would say, “We will send somebody in”.

Andrew Boff AM: These comments about integrating industry into the curricula of colleges has been going on for decades to my knowledge. Are we no further along the line?

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel): There is work to do.

Andrew Boff AM: Yes. You are there.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): The presence of governors is really important. If you have governors from the world of work and colleges have those then, of course, you ensure that that is the case.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Now you have really started talking and I am just going to hold you there.

Andrew Boff AM: Did I take the wrong tangent, I am terribly sorry.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): No, it is OK, it is good. I just want us to get a little bit of clarity about devolution. I want to bring in Darren Johnson [AM]. He has got a couple of questions about the government devolution of skills.

Darren Johnson AM: At what stage are the discussions with government now on the devolution of skills funding? We had a very strong case put when we had the Devolution Working Group here.

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): We are at the beginning, is the answer. What came out of the discussions we have had with them is that devolution, as an offer, is on the table for London. Officers are meeting with government officials to actually discuss what that entails. You will have seen that some areas, for example Sheffield, have already signed up to devolution. We are being slightly more cautious in London, mainly around the detail behind it. What we are concerned about is the lack of administrative budget associated with the devolution offer. At this stage we are also very unclear about what devolution actually means; not in terms of influence, which everybody unanimously has agreed with, but more around the mechanisms of how devolution will be administered in the future.

Darren Johnson AM: In terms of how it is fitting in with other things going on already, how will the current area review be affected by the planned devolution in --

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): The area review will not be affected by the devolution. What we can say is that the outcomes of the area review will affect devolution.

Darren Johnson AM: Is there a lot of danger in making substantial changes to the sector before the governance arrangements and the funding issues are sorted?

Michelle Cuomo Boorer (Senior Manager - Skills, SMEs and Employment, Greater London Authority): Devolution is over a three year period. The Government has announced that by 2018/19 we would move to a fully devolved system, although they have not actually defined what a "fully devolved system" is at this stage. What they have provided us with so far is a route map to devolution so 2016/17

would be the first year of devolved funding in which the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) would remain the commissioner. The role of London would be to influence the provision that is delivered. In actual reality we have probably already missed that boat for 2016/17, allocations have already been made to providers or are imminently being made. As we mentioned earlier, the funding envelope has not changed. What we are intending to do is work with the sector to understand far more about the allocations and how they are working. The area reviews absolutely feed into this because, you are quite right, we need a good picture of what is delivered before we start saying something is not being delivered. Therefore 2016/17 is very much a collaborative year, working together with the college system and local authorities. We are making sure that we are influencing what is happening but from a little bit further away.

The following year, 2017/18, we move into a slightly different system. From 2017/18 there will be a different funding envelope, which I have already mentioned, which we will have to look at and decide whether that is impacting London or not, and whether positively or negatively. We would then have more influence over the provision that is brought. However, London will not be the commissioner at that stage, it will still be the SFA. We would be looking to have agreements with providers which will specify outcomes that we would expect to be delivered. Again, a significant amount of work needs to go into that ahead of that, working with the sector and working very closely with local authorities who will be in their sub-regional groupings articulating the demand in their area as well.

Then we move into 2018/19 which is the big year for devolved funding. That is when we potentially move to a new system. The SFA would no longer be the commissioner, should we sign up to devolution. London government would then be the commissioner of funding. We need to understand how that will work in practice. It is a three year route.

Darren Johnson AM: Obviously then that affects the commissioning as well. Do we see the need for a single London Skills Commissioner?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): I will have a go at answering that one. Michelle set out absolutely the timescale. We ought to take the view that the words mean what they seem to mean, ie that there is full devolution on offer to London from 2018. That is something that will be managed at a pan-London level obviously, but also at a sub-regional level. Therefore the question about resources for administration is a very important one because, of course, we will need some resource at a pan-London level and at a sub-regional level to commission effectively for these programmes.

The other thing that will be happening, all being well, is that some other programmes will also be devolved through that time period. Particularly programmes of employment support and some health provision are also likely to be devolved. Again, that is an opportunity for both a pan-London level and a sub-regional level to link these programmes together to run European Social Funding alongside and to really start to build the capacity to effectively take this role over at a London level. There is a big challenge for us. There is a challenge for the GLA and for the boroughs both individually and collectively, to get ourselves ready to assume this role with the stakeholders that we have in London and with the providers.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Can I come in here because I do not think I got the answer from you, Andrew, to the question that Darren [Johnson AM] asked? Why I say this is because the Assembly, the Mayor and the Education Select Committee [Education Panel] are all on one page and very cross about London being divided into three regarding the regional schools commissioners. I believe those three would find themselves in the same position in terms of understanding the need for one skills commissioner for London. Are you able to say whether London Councils would agree that that is the best way forward?

Andrew Travers (Chief Executive, London Borough of Barnet, and London Councils lead on skills devolution): I think the majority of stakeholders – London Councils, councils and others – would be arguing for a synchronisation of the system. The fact that there are schools commissioners that have a rather peculiar geographical footprint that does not accord with other ways in which we are working is probably not that helpful. Given that London is aspiring to take an overall commissioning role then it would make sense for the associated institutions to align with that, some focus for London as a whole in terms of commissioning and regulation. That would be very helpful. I think most of us would think that.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): As they say in America, we would be able to know. Aligned with an elected Mayor of London it is reasonable to then see a relationship between that Mayor of London and that single skills commissioner.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Everyone is in the early stages of discussing a skills commissioner. We had a session yesterday on a skills vision. My reflections overnight on that are that the skills agenda for London is so huge that the skills commissioner role could be a ginormous role. I was just looking at some helpful stuff from Mary [Vine Morris]. The 50-plus colleges in London are £1 billion worth of income. They are a huge resource. I do not know whether it is a skills commissioner which assumes everything is lumped into that pot or whether, in the first instance or in addition, you need something like a colleges' commissioner to try to help steer that direction for the Mayor. You definitely need something to hold the sensor to support the Mayor developing their vision.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): The last question on our list – and you have actually fed in a number of recommendations which we will tease out – is about what the next Mayor of London should do. We are quite clear we want the next Mayor of London to say, “My colleges”. It would be a foolhardy mayor, I say, who did not say that. Anything else? Quickly, what else do you want to add to that?

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): The new Mayor of London needs to embrace adult education.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Not only say it but embrace it.

Dr Sue Pember OBE (Director of Policy and External Relations, HOLEX): Yes. Adult education particularly because we talk, as we rightly should, a lot about 16 to 19-year olds. Adult education skills but adult education particularly.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): I would agree with that. Two things for the Mayor of London other than, “My colleges”. One is helping develop the higher level skills that London needs and building pipelines for those. The other one is to recognise the other London and the need to support disadvantaged learners, adult students and all of that. A Mayor of London that can pitch for both of those. If you want an example, have a look at City Colleges of Chicago. They joined all their colleges up. The Mayor of Chicago is permanently talking about the role that City Colleges of Chicago has in doing those two things; higher level what they call associate degree work, and then really supporting poor and disadvantaged communities.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Before we could support that we would have to go to Chicago.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): If you want a guide to take you I would happily volunteer.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Anyone else?

Jack Morris OBE (Co-Chair of the Skills and Employment Working Group, London Enterprise Panel):

The only thing I would say, Chair, is that the reason I actually got involved in FE so many years ago – rather than perhaps the other education sectors that are out there – is because I was really interested in how we make that bridge and transition from academic life into working life. To me it is the FE Sector that does that so well. It really does it well. It is not perfect, as we said right at the beginning of this meeting, but it does a fantastic job in terms of making that connect and putting people onto the right track in terms of a sustainable job for the future. What this is about at the end of the day – and the reason I got involved in this – is people that are workless, people that are not finding their way into what is effectively one of the most successful jobs economies in the world and how we can make that work more effectively. For almost as long as I can remember FE's role in all that has been a bit misunderstood and has been undervalued. I would encourage any Mayor that serves London to understand the value of what the FE system really achieves well and support that, and support what we are all trying to achieve collectively in making it even more successful and more effective into the future. That is what I would say.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you so much. Anything else?

Mary Vine Morris (Regional Director, Association of Colleges): I absolutely commend what Jack [Morris OBE] has said. I earlier on gave my little wish list, accepting that perhaps I might have to measure the bit about the keyworkers, for a new Mayor. Absolutely critical is the bit about acknowledging the value that this sector has to offer. It is not very well seen. It is not very noticeable. Therefore it makes it even more difficult for Londoners to actually accept that they also have a responsibility and desire to manage their own working lives, to manage their own ambitions and that learning is a critical part of that. Changing that sort of culture so that it is all part of a more dynamic city.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you so much. Back to the point that you made about the lack of understanding and the way we take FE for granted, just before we came I asked colleagues if they knew what percentage of certificates came out of the FE Sector. That ranged from 2% to about 40%. The real answer, which I found out this week, was 65% of all certifications come out of the FE system. We just take it so for granted, do we not?

It has been a pleasure chairing this session. We have shown that the hashtag that we started with, *#weloveFE*, is a worthy hashtag. There are so many people committed to this sector. Thank you all for joining us this afternoon. As you leave this building or later on in the week if you think about anything you want us to be clear about, please, do drop it in to us and then we will be collating this paper. We will be then posting it and looking for this Panel's work to be restarted in the next administration. Thank you very much.

Sir Frank McLoughlin (Principal, City and Islington College): Chair, if any Members wanted to come and visit a college, my campus at the Angel is just a short step away. I can extend an invitation to Committee members if they would like to come up.

Jennette Arnold OBE AM (Chair): Thank you very much for that.