

APPENDIX 1

Skills for Londoners Framework Consultation (2021-22) Southwark Council Consultation Response

Prioritising qualifications at level 3 and below

The Government is currently reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below that are funded through the AEB, with a view to rationalising the current number of technical qualifications, prior to the rollout of T Levels for 16 to 18 year-old learners, and to establish a set of funding approval criteria for all qualifications at level 3 and below in the future.

The Government's rationale for these changes is to reduce complexity for learners and employers, and to prioritise funding for high-quality courses. However, there is a risk that this will narrow the choice of qualifications available to adult learners, particularly at levels 2 and 3, which can lead to stronger employment outcomes. Employers will still need a wide range of qualifications to cater for the scale of occupational roles across London's labour market.

The Government has recently published proposals for how it will withdraw funding for qualifications with low and no publicly funded enrolments by August 2021. The Government will consult on the remaining qualifications available for public funding later this year. Alongside this rationalisation, from September 2020, a moratorium will be introduced on approving new qualifications for funding at level 3 and below. However, an exemption to the moratorium is in place where a qualification 'responds to a regional skills priority'.

City Hall has previously consulted on funding specific level 3 qualifications for disadvantaged groups and/ or in priority sectors. Further analysis is now being carried out to assess the options for doing this and the impact of any change given the pressure on existing budgets.

In the meantime, City Hall is keen to understand the impact these proposed changes could have on Londoners and London employers, and to identify the qualifications in scope for review which could be retained as part of London's wider skills offer.

1a. Which qualifications at level 3 and below should City Hall continue to fund as a regional skills priority based on their importance to London's economy, and why?

City Hall should prioritise qualifications in English and maths at level 3 and below, given how crucial these qualifications can be for entry into sustainable employment and progression within work. Beyond English and maths, qualifications should be prioritised in sectors where there is a strict requirement

for qualifications, such as health & social care, as opposed to sectors where employers value aptitude and in-job learning more highly, such as hospitality.

City Hall should encourage closer working relationships with employers to determine where specific skills shortages below level 3 exist.

1b. What additional funding flexibilities would support the delivery of these qualifications to priority groups, and why?

More flexibility to deliver courses out of hours, at weekends and via remote access would help to support those who are in paid jobs and affected by in-work poverty.

Introducing additional funding flexibilities to allow those in work to achieve up to a level 3 qualification without the need to take out an Advanced Learner Loan would support greater in-work progression, helping to alleviate in-work poverty.

For adults out of work it would be beneficial to tailor provision to focus GCSE level maths and English courses on developing useful life skills such as household budgeting, digital skills and finding work.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

There is a growing crisis in adult SEND provision in London, driven by increasing demand and reductions in national budgets.

The London Post-16 SEND Review ('the Review') identified that 70% of the projected demand for SEND provision over the next five years in London would be for adults.

Yet participation rates in AEB-funded provision of Londoners who reported a disability do not currently reflect London's disabled population. Achievement rates are also typically lower for those with a declared disability than those without.

The Mayor wants to use the AEB to increase the participation, retention and achievement of disabled Londoners in education and training, building on the findings of the Review. He has already taken steps to support more learners with SEND to access AEB provision by:

Fully funding Deaf Londoners to take qualifications in British Sign Language (BSL) where this would better support them to access further learning and work.

From 2020/21, upskilling London's Further Education (FE) workforce to better support learners with SEND.

Making SEND a priority for the Skills for Londoners Innovation Fund.

While acknowledging the limited powers the Mayor has in respect of SEND provision, City Hall is keen to explore what more can be done to improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND to increase participation and achievements.

2. How can City Hall further improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND to increase participation and achievements?

City Hall could help to improve the provision of adult education in London for learners with SEND by making an investment to implement recommendations of the 2019 London post-16 SEND review, in particular:

- facilitating the creation of hubs to co-ordinate relevant training and share resources between specialist and mainstream providers, thereby upskilling the mainstream sector to help them support learners with SEND
- increasing funding for SEND provision to meet gaps in supply, including assisting the mainstream sector to support more people with SEND
- developing a London-wide register of providers for commissioners and other stakeholders, including information on the destinations of their young people with SEND as an indicator of the quality of provision

Supporting the FE workforce to meet the skills needs of the future

The Mayor committed in his Skills for Londoners Strategy to “raise the quality of facilities, teaching and leadership in London’s further and adult education sector, promote its specialisms and ensure its sustainability.”

There is a growing body of evidence highlighting the importance of continuous professional development in FE. Analysis by the Education and Training Foundation found that, nationally, while the sector has a high level of organisational and individual participation in training and development, it does not meet all demands, particularly in: leadership and management, maths and English, and use of digital and other new technologies for teaching and learning.

Responses to last year’s Framework consultation reinforced the need to upskill London’s FE workforce, and the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding also recommended that investment in the FE workforce should be a priority as it would improve recruitment and retention and draw in more expertise from industry.

The Mayor is already supporting workforce development in FE through the Digital Talent Programme, the Mayor’s Construction Academy, and the ESOL Practitioners project.

From the academic year 2020/21, the Mayor will use the AEB to fund the upskilling of the FE workforce to deliver better support to learners with SEND. To build on this policy change, City Hall would like to further understand the workforce development needs of adult education providers in London and to identify their priorities and future training needs, focusing on two priority areas for the Mayor: digital transformation and green skills.

3a. How are you embedding skills for a green economy in your provision and ensuring staff have the necessary capabilities to prepare for the transition to London becoming a zero-carbon city by 2050?

This is an area in development in line with the council's climate change strategy.

3b. How are you bringing new digital approaches into the classroom, and supporting staff to develop their own digital capabilities?

Southwark Council has developed an Essential Digital Skills Action Plan in partnership with a range of local providers and stakeholders to improve understanding of need and demand, collectively deliver sufficient and accessible provision and to develop a collaborative approach to innovation. As part of this work, Southwark Adult and Community Learning, in collaboration with other providers, is exploring new digital approaches to enhance the learning experience.

3c. More broadly, how can City Hall support greater digital leadership and practices such as service design, data-sharing and collaboration?

A one-stop digital leadership and learning Hub (akin to a virtual learning environment) would be highly useful to support development in this area by making up-to-date online specialist resources more accessible to leaders, managers and teaching staff. City Hall could also help to support digital leadership by brokering more formalised and structured collaboration between Further Education, Adult Education and Higher Education.

3d. How could the Mayor support the professional development of London's FE workforce to be more responsive to the broader needs of London's economy and employers?

City Hall could support London's FE workforce by investing in upskilling teaching staff, helping to make professional development more accessible and affordable. To support ongoing priorities, upskilling programmes should focus on digital skills and skills for the green economy.

Supporting in-work learners

For many people in work it can be difficult accessing training opportunities. The main barriers to learning for those in employment include: lack of time, lack of employer support, cost of learning, unsuitable course location/ times, or caring/ family responsibilities.

The Mayor has already addressed some of these challenges by extending full funding of AEB courses to eligible in-work groups earning below the London Living Wage. Through his Good Work Standard, the Mayor aims to support local employment and progression pathways and improve the quality of work for all Londoners.

Responses to last year's Skills for Londoners Framework highlighted the need for more flexibility in how provision is delivered (e.g. evenings or weekend classes/ blended learning/ local delivery) to ensure it fits around learners' existing work and family commitments.

Building on this, City Hall wants to understand how the AEB can support those working within London's increasingly flexible labour market to access training opportunities, and support providers to deliver provision outside of core hours.

4a. How are you currently delivering training to in-work groups, including provision outside of core hours, and how can City Hall improve access to learning for in-work groups who cannot access core hours provision?

Southwark Adult & Community Learning offers a range of different courses outside of core hours which are more accessible to residents who are in work. Southwark Council also offers in-work progression support through the Southwark Works employment support service. The support offer is tailored to the client's individual circumstances, needs and barriers with the aim of helping clients achieve better pay or contract conditions. This may involve supporting clients to access additional training or qualifications delivered by a range of providers.

Southwark Council is also working with Lambeth and Lewisham councils as part of the Better Placed partnership to further develop an in-work progression support model. This works includes exploring how best to support residents in work to access learning. The Routeways pilot delivered in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark by St Giles Trust in 2018 & 2019 discovered that many low-paid clients require support with their current situation before engaging with training. By offering coaching and support residents overcame these barriers, engaged in education and training before progressing into a London living wage job. Our boroughs have identified this as an under-addressed concern and will explore how to provide an in-work progression offer to more residents. In addition to increasing provision outside of core hours, City Hall should consider how it can support in-work progression services to reduce a range of additional barriers to

participating in education by delivering personalized support at a time that works for the client.

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Access to Information, Advice and Guidance and soft skills training has been as important for delivering outcomes as accredited training. Effective information, advice and guidance allowed Routeways clients to make informed education and training choices linked to their employability and their aspirations. Engaging clients with personalized guidance linked to their employability resulted in 50% of the total Routeways cohort increasing their pay. Much of this training was delivered in the evenings by independent training providers and St Giles Trust and tailored to the client's needs. City Hall should consider accelerating their plans for a single all-age careers service as outlined in 'Careers for Londoners'. Many of the Routeways cohort progressed through coaching, guidance and employability training, not accredited qualifications. Where accredited qualifications were obtained, these were overwhelmingly delivered outside of FE Colleges who were unable to provide a flexible enough offer to clients. Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark are currently developing a digital careers guidance solution in partnership with LSBU- with the aim of scaling up careers guidance for people already in-work. City Hall should use this project as a demonstrator for how careers advice could be offered as a universal entitlement in London.

4b. Recognising the challenges many workers in London's increasingly flexible labour market face in accessing training opportunities, how can skills provision better support them?

Southwark Adult Community Learning service user feedback has found a significant number of participants are in work and using the service to improve their employability. Participants are typically working towards improving their English, securing recognised English and Maths qualifications or working towards employment-related certification, such as Childcare courses. Much of the above is delivered in 10 week courses, available at different times throughout the year, which is found to be a more manageable commitment than whole-year courses provided through FE colleges. ACL learners were often unsure whether their training was the most effective option for their progression because of a lack of careers advice.

City Hall could improve access to learning for in-work groups by improving the careers information, advice and guidance available to Londoners already in-work. Resident feedback has highlighted a common lack of awareness of IAG and opportunities in the local labour market. Improved careers information, advice and guidance needs to be integrated into training courses to better support learners' career progression following completion, as well as being made more readily available to those in work but not currently engaged in training.

Improving the careers advice offer to in-work Londoners would lead to better informed education choices and increased confidence for participating in education. The insight gained from good careers advice could also support commissioners to better understand the training needs of local residents. 40% of clients participating in the Routeways in-work progression pilot delivered in Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark by St Giles Trust were qualified at or above level 3. It highlighted that confidence, soft skills and a lack of social capital can be the main factor affecting labour market mobility. Skills provision would better support them by being focused on employability advice and careers guidance rather than accredited training. City Hall should consider providing targeted support to this group where wider softer skills present a significant barrier to mobility and progression in the labour market.

City Hall should support shorter courses that are directly linked to employment outcomes. A key success of the Southwark Construction Skills Centre model is building strong relationships with employers to deliver short courses developed in direct response to specific employer needs with employment opportunities attached to completion of the course. This is a much more effective way of delivering employment outcomes than a year-long FE College course where participants are not sure what the benefit will be and do not have any contact with employers. It feels more tangible and less risky for the client, who will depend on a steady income: the offer of employment is a valuable incentive to complete the training.

AEB funding systems

The Review of Post-18 Education and Funding identified the complexity of the current national funding system City Hall has inherited to deliver adult education in London. The report found the system was inflexible, complex, and burdensome for providers, diverting time and resources away from prioritising and responding effectively to the needs of Londoners.

There is little evidence that the current funding system supports providers to deliver improved learning outcomes. Moreover, the excessive reliance on a myriad of rate and rule calculations results in more bureaucratic and, arguably, unnecessary data processing, hindering the ability of providers to plan and forecast delivery with confidence.

City Hall is therefore keen to understand if there is a simpler approach to funding provision that would enable colleges, local authorities, and other

providers, to deliver a transformative teaching and learning experience.

5. How could City Hall create a simpler and more effective funding system?

A dedicated account manager is highly valuable as this supports providers to more easily navigate the complexities of funding rules and discuss emerging issues and realistic mitigating actions. Where account managers have been withdrawn in the past, financial difficulties have increased. The GLA has introduced project delivery officers which is crucial to the success of delivery.

Data reporting

City Hall is looking to publish a range of London AEB data in order to support policy development, inform and engage stakeholders, and encourage greater transparency.

The Mayor previously consulted on his proposals to create a Skills and Employment Knowledge Hub to provide relevant data, including labour and careers information, which highlighted the need for more transparency and accountability in reporting AEB data.

City Hall therefore wants to understand the data requirements of providers and, more precisely, which data extracts from the Individual Learner Record would be most usefully shared (balancing this against the administrative burden it could create for providers).

6a. What AEB data extracts from the Individual Learner Record would be most usefully shared?

Data extracts that could be usefully shared to develop social and financial inclusion and in-work progression include: educational starting point, disability, ethnicity, employment status and employment outcomes.

6b. How would your organisation use this information?

This information would be used to inform strategic curriculum planning, including curriculum areas, levels, volumes and geographical reach and access across the borough. It would also be used in further development Southwark's careers advice, in-work progression and skills policies and programmes.

Supporting former unpaid carers

Many unpaid carers face significant barriers to entering or re-entering work. The Mayor wants to support them to participate in and benefit from employment opportunities in London.

According to the 2011 census, around 689,000 Londoners spend at least an hour a week caring for someone, while more than a third of those with caring responsibilities (approximately 255,000) provide more than 20 hours of care a week.

A substantial proportion of unpaid carers are unable to work or participate in formal learning while they are caring. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) benefits statistics show that there are around 97,000 working age claimants of the Carer's Allowance in London, and the vast majority (76%) are women.

Carers can face significant barriers to entering employment or re-entering work after their caring responsibilities end, including poor mental or physical health, low confidence and low levels of qualifications.

Losing carers from the workforce or failing to reintegrate them is also bad for London's economy, resulting in lost productivity and the under-utilisation of valuable skills.

Through his Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, the Mayor committed to provide employability and skills support to carers to enable them to participate in, and benefit from, employment opportunities in London. City Hall is keen to understand how the AEB could be used to support carers to enter/ re-enter work.

7. How could the AEB be used to support unpaid carers unable to fully participate in work to enter/ re-enter employment?

The AEB could help to support unpaid carers to gain the qualifications they need to enter or re-enter work. However, qualifications should be seen as one element of a wider support offer to help unpaid carers move towards work and indeed many carers may require tailored support to overcome a range of barriers before being able to engage with training. Southwark Works, the council's long standing employment support service, has been successful in supporting thousands of residents, including carers, to enter work by offering an individualised services to tackle a range of barriers and supporting access to training where needed. City Hall should promote the AEB as a route into work for carers through local networks and organisations working with unpaid carers.

In order to make provision accessible to carers, consideration should be given to increased flexibility and options for remote learning. The need for high quality and accessible careers advice and guidance is also particularly relevant to carers to ensure that training results in employment outcomes.

Reaching the digitally disengaged

While more Londoners than ever are online, a significant number remain 'digitally disengaged', lacking the essential digital skills needed to benefit from, participate in and contribute to the digital world. This has both a social and economic cost. Research published by Lloyds Banking Group identified that consumers on average could save approximately £744 from being digitally capable.

Barriers to digital participation include lack of skills to go online confidently, as well as concerns around security and fraud. Although the majority of those digitally disengaged are elderly, around half are under 60 and the same proportion come from low income households. In London, 14 per cent of benefit claimants are digitally disengaged. People with a disability are also more than twice as likely to be offline than those without a disability.

Through the launch of his Smarter London Plan, the Mayor will develop new approaches to digital inclusion to support more Londoners to develop the digital skills they need for work and life.

From this year, the Department for Education (DfE) will introduce an entitlement to fully fund eligible adults with no or low digital skills to enrol on specified essential digital qualifications at entry level and level 1. City Hall is keen to raise awareness of this new entitlement and motivate and support London's digitally disengaged to access it.

8. How should City Hall raise awareness of the new basic digital skills entitlement and motivate digitally disengaged Londoners to access it?

Our work with a range of digital skills providers and community support providers has shown that many residents lacking essential digital skills who are not currently engaged in training will present with these needs when accessing a range of other services such as housing, universal credit, employment support, libraries and other community facilities. In order to reach those residents who could best benefit from the basic digital skills entitlement, promotion should be directed through borough networks and community providers which are best placed to support residents to access the entitlement. This will also help boroughs and local organisations to link the digital skills offer to other support available from local employment support organisations. Communications delivered through the local authority will help the GLA target those most likely to be in need of support.

Southwark Council has developed an Essential Digital Skills Action Plan in partnership with a range of local providers and stakeholders to improve understanding of need and demand for essential digital skills, collectively deliver sufficient and accessible provision that responds to learner needs and to develop a collaborative approach to innovation. The basic digital skills entitlement could be promoted through these types of networks to reach the most digitally excluded residents.

Promotion of the digital skills entitlement should also take into account residents' access to devices and to the internet. Many residents with low incomes do not have a computer at home. These residents can access computers through libraries, JCP and community settings. Provision and promotion of essential digital skills should be delivered in these spaces to reach those clients. We have found many residents will have access to a smart phone and City Hall should therefore consider supporting initiatives that trial digital skills delivery through apps and mobile phones. The Better Placed partnership of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark are exploring delivery of digital skills through a digital careers service. Training will be accessible through an app-supporting residents who may not have regular access to a computer.

Preventing future violence

The level of violent crime in London is unacceptably high and extremely damaging to individuals, families, and communities. As part of his approach to reducing and preventing future violence in the capital, the Mayor is committed to tackling the root causes of violent crime by adopting a public health approach and has established a new Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to facilitate this.

A public health approach means working across organisational boundaries to generate long-term solutions, as well as short-term responses. Types of activities include: working with those directly exposed to violence, supporting those at risk of violence, and strengthening community resilience.

In September 2019, the Mayor convened a roundtable with FE Leaders and the VRU to discuss work to date on tackling youth violence. City Hall is now keen to further understand the role the FE sector can play in developing a public health approach to reducing violence.

9a. What activities are FE providers currently engaged in to prevent and reduce violence?

We welcome the initiative City Hall has taken in setting up the VRU. Like City Hall colleagues, the Southwark Adult & Community Learning team recognises the need for and importance of education in the prevention of violence. The team continues to undertake professional update and training in safeguarding and the Prevent Duty. Awareness of the issues related to and surrounding violence is also raised through class and course activities and discussions.

9b. What are the barriers for FE providers in supporting learners at risk of violent crime?

Identification of learners at risk can be a significant challenge and can require a resource intensive focus. The complexity of issues which make an individual at

risk of violent crime also present a challenge for FE providers to be able to support learners.

9c. How can City Hall support FE providers to overcome these barriers and support a public health approach to reducing violence?

City Hall could support FE providers to overcome some of the barriers through developing or supporting a range of interventions which could include:

- Providing resources and case studies on a public health approach to reducing violence
- Producing toolkits for providers
- Creating a dedicated specialist “hotline” which providers can contact for specific advice and guidance
- Adapting guidelines preventing violence in young people for adults
- Publicising targets and timelines for the VRU’s work

Apprenticeships

The Mayor is committed to increasing the number of quality apprenticeships to help Londoners earn, learn, and progress in their careers, and to enable businesses to meet their skills needs now and in the future.

Despite the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy and accompanying reforms, the overall number of apprenticeship starts in London has fallen by 12 per cent between 2015/16 and 2018/19. At the same time, London’s businesses are reporting skills gaps: 13 per cent of the capital’s employers struggled to recruit the skills they needed in 2017.

Responding to this challenge, the Mayor has established Apprenticeships for Londoners: three projects to support businesses in London to make better use of their levy to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities. As part of his Call for Action, the Mayor, with London Councils, has called for full devolution of apprenticeship funding to London.

As well as increasing the number of quality apprenticeships, City Hall is also keen to understand the drivers behind recent trends in apprenticeship starts in the capital. While the overall number of apprenticeship starts has fallen in London, between 2015/16 and 2017/18, the number of higher level (levels 4 and 5) apprenticeship starts has increased three-fold, while intermediate and advanced level apprenticeship starts have reduced by 50 per cent over the same period.

10a. How can the Mayor work with providers and employers to support progression routes into and from higher level apprenticeships for young people as well as low income and disadvantaged Londoners?

Southwark Council works closely with employers, training providers and employment support providers to promote higher level apprenticeships as part of ongoing career progression. Key challenges facing young people in accessing higher level apprenticeships include a lack of high quality careers advice, difficulties navigating the apprenticeship application process and perceptions amongst young people and their parents around the value and prestige of apprenticeships. For people in work and seeking to progress in their careers, lacking the required entry qualifications can also be barrier and this is seen particularly in sectors such as health and social. Through the work of the Southwark Skills Partnership and the Better Placed partnership with Lambeth and Leishman councils, we are developing proposals to improve the local careers advice and guidance offer to provide good quality advice around higher level apprenticeships as part of a career progression route.

City Hall could help to support progression routes into and from higher level apprenticeships by accelerating plans for a single all-age careers service as outlined in 'Careers for Londoners' to ensure that young people as well as low income and disadvantaged Londoners are able to access opportunities such as higher level apprenticeships. City Hall could also lead or support specific promotion of high level apprenticeships to young people and parents by delivering clear messages around the potential career opportunities and prospects.

10b. What are the drivers of recent trends in London's apprenticeship system (growth in higher level apprenticeship starts and decline in lower and intermediate) and what impact are they having on learning and employment opportunities for Londoners?

The Apprenticeship Levy has played a significant part in reducing the lower and intermediate apprenticeship opportunities available as Levy payers utilise their Levy payments to upskill existing staff or offer more Level 4 roles.

Through our work with employers, training providers and employment support providers, we have also found that the entry requirements for many lower and intermediate apprenticeships can still prevent many residents from accessing these opportunities. Low pay is also a barrier, as well as difficulty in navigating the application process. The barriers to lower and intermediate apprenticeships faced by residents who would most benefit from these opportunities may be driving a decline in starts, compared to the increase in take up of higher level apprenticeship which tend to suit those who have already achieved qualifications.

The relatively high entry requirements for many lower and intermediate apprenticeships is reducing the range of high quality learning and employment opportunities on offer to those who would benefit most from sustainable career progression. Employers and providers should ensure that entry requirements accurately reflect the demands of the training and work and consider options

for lowering entry requirements and building in mechanisms to support learners to develop functional skills over the course of their training.

To help support more residents to be able to access apprenticeships, Southwark Council is currently developing a pre-apprenticeship support offer to help residents access apprenticeships through support to gain qualifications and develop employability skills. We are also reviewing the Southwark Apprenticeship Standard, which sets the standard for quality local apprenticeships, to ensure that this scheme continues to be fit for purpose.

EdTech

Education Technology (edtech) is an increasing part of all education sectors. The UK is the edtech capital of Europe, with London at its heart. It is estimated that the industry will be worth £3.4bn in 2021.

Edtech can deliver wider learning opportunities, enhance teaching capacity, strengthen student support and analytical data, and enable organisational efficiencies. Edtech has the potential to transform teaching, learning, and support in adult education. However, it has to be effectively directed, applied, and scaled.

According to a recent survey, FE staff use digital teaching activities significantly more often than those in higher education, but only around a third feel they receive recognition when they develop the digital aspects of their role. There are also concerns about evidence, with education providers unsure about what works in practice and edtech suppliers struggling to test and refine their products because of scepticism about their effectiveness.

The Government's edtech strategy (2019) seeks to address these challenges, while the Mayor's Smarter London Together roadmap to make London 'the smartest city in the world' includes a mission to enhance digital leadership and skills.

City Hall wants to understand where edtech is currently being used and where it has been shown to be effective in AEB-funded and wider post-19 education. City Hall also wants to identify opportunities to provide strategic direction, targeted funding, and programme development to support the adoption and use of edtech, including in delivering AEB-funded provision.

11a. In what ways are you currently using edtech?

Southwark Adult and Community Learning is using foundational Edtech in the classroom and good use is made of relevant discussion boards, video and websites. Current facilities are not set up to offer digital teaching capabilities and this is an area for further development.

11b. Where do you think edtech has the most potential?

Edtech has the most potential in empowering learners to research, select and follow their own learning journeys and to allow providers to reach a wider pool of learners. This could be particularly useful in supporting those with limited mobility or who are currently in work and would benefit from accessing learning more flexibly.

11c. How can City Hall support the effective use of edtech?

City Hall can support the development and effective use of edtech through making funding available for learning institutions to install the necessary technologies and facilities to. City Hall can also further support this development by supporting providers in the procurement and selection of products to achieve better value for money.

Capital Funding

The Mayor and the London Economic Action Partnership have made significant capital funding investment in the further education and training estate in recent years. Funding was allocated based on:

- *Ability to meet London's current and future skills needs.*
- *Evidence of partnerships and collaboration with employers and local stakeholders in the design and delivery of provision.*
- *Approaches to delivery which secure the highest levels of social, economic and environmental value.*
- *Place making and high-quality design, strengthening links with local communities.*

A full evaluation of the impact of the capital investment programme is about to commence. The Mayor is calling on the Government to commit to continued devolved capital funding to invest in new facilities and technologies to support FE providers to upgrade London's FE estate. It is also essential that we ensure our buildings are resilient for the future and are as environmentally friendly as possible.

In the meantime, City Hall is keen to hear providers' views on what their priorities are for future capital investments, as well as to gain a sense of the impact of investment to date on the condition of the wider estate.

12a. How would you rate the condition of your current estates/ facilities and what are the implications of this on staff and learners?

Southwark Adult & Community Learning estates are not funded by GLA capital funding.

12b. Do your physical estates/ facilities allow you to meet local skills priorities? If not, what physical improvements are needed to enable skills priorities to be met?

Southwark Adult & Community Learning estates are not funded by GLA capital funding.

12c. How resilient are your current estates/ facilities to climate change and its environmental impact?

Southwark Adult & Community Learning estates are not funded by GLA capital funding.

Skills providers as anchors for local communities

Skills providers have a valuable contribution to make in the communities they serve or are located within. Many of London's skills providers are anchor institutions. As well as delivering skills and education, they help to build successful communities and local economies, for example by supporting and hosting local events, providing referral services for learners with additional needs, creating pathways to employment, and convening local employers.

The Mayor wants to explore how City Hall can strengthen this activity and the positive impact that skills providers have in their wider communities.

13. How can City Hall support the work providers do with their local communities beyond skills provision?

Southwark Council is working with Lambeth and Lewisham councils as part of the Better Placed partnership to develop skills support across the three boroughs. Better Placed has separately responded to this consultation and this response is replicated below.

Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark residents benefit from employment support organisations that provide a wide ranging support offer based on the needs of the client. City Hall should look to support them with flexible funding which requires simple reporting, as well as directing promotion of City Hall initiatives through borough networks.

Charities with close community touchpoints are often more trusted by clients than public sector organisations. A key part of the Routeways pilot's success was the delivery by St Giles Trust, who were trusted and experienced in supporting vulnerable residents. The AEB funding structure largely focusses on big organisations, and it would benefit local anchor charities to have greater access to dispersed AEB funding pots. The small trusted charities struggle with the expertise and capacity to bid for funding in the same way as FE institutions. Flexible funds that promote wrap around support for smaller skills providers would help support their work.

London boroughs are also key anchors in the local community, and have the closest relationship with residents of any public sector organisation. Future skills and careers strategy delivery should adopt a local-first approach, where boroughs are first considered for their ability to convene local stakeholders and engage hard-to-reach communities. Boroughs also have good links with local employers. Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark are highly supportive of the GLA's devolution aspiration. City Hall should consider delivering more pilots and demonstrators in partnership with boroughs. Better Placed of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark is one example of boroughs working together to deliver pilots over functional economic areas, which would useful input into future GLA pan-London commissioning strategies.

City Hall should consider the trust residents have with these anchor institutions. Many are a key source for advice and guidance for employment and a range of concerns. City Hall should look to recognise and formalise this by commission information, advice and guidance support in a dispersed community wealth-building model. This provides the most cost effective and trusted source of support.