

THE ISLE OF WIGHT 14-19 AREA INSPECTION

SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

September 2003

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INTRODUCTION

1. This self-assessment report has been produced by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LSC and the Isle of Wight LEA, with significant contributions from key partners, in particular the Connexions Service. It incorporates views from the Isle of Wight Tertiary Strategy Group (TSG)*, which represents the key stakeholders in education and training on the island.
2. It builds on the Isle of Wight area review commissioned by the LEA and the local LSC (LLSC), section 10 and ALI inspection reports, and LLSC/LEA reviews of provision. It also draws upon the findings of a survey commissioned from the Responsive College Unit (RCU) in 2002. It provides a basis for the LEA, LLSC and partners to reflect upon their performance and continue to agree strategies for the future development of education and training 14-19 on the island. It offers further information for Ofsted to inform the inspection.
3. The report contains sections on each of the questions in the revised draft Ofsted area inspection (14-19) framework. Each section begins with a list of key strengths and weaknesses and areas for further development. This is followed by paragraphs giving the partners' view of the island's provision in relation to each question.
4. Since undertaking the Area Review of the island, the LLSC has continued with its programme of Area Reviews, all of which will contribute to the Strategic Area Review due to be completed by March 2005. Two of the three remaining areas are being reviewed and the last remaining review is about to start.
5. *See Appendix for a description of the role of the TSG and its work to date.

SUMMARY

6. Education and training for 14-19 year olds on the Isle of Wight is delivered by five high schools, a general further education college, one secondary-age special school, a pupil referral unit, and eight work-based learning providers. Close working relationships between the partners on the island are leading to an increasingly focused approach to strategic planning in the area. The quality assurance systems of providers are being strengthened and are leading to improved success rates for many young people. Whilst achievement on the island is below the national average at some levels, GCSE A* - C achievement rates in some subjects and some level 3 achievements are already above national averages or increasing at a higher rate than nationally. The broad range of provision covers all 14 areas of learning. Participation in post-compulsory education on the island is high. Post-16 teaching and learning is good. The qualifications on entry of many students are lower than national figures but overall achievements are often above benchmarks, indicating a good level of added value. Progression to higher education from level 3 courses is comparable with national averages; increasing opportunities on the island and with partner institutions on the mainland should lead to increased participation at higher levels. The partners on the island are aware that there is still work to be done to raise standards and the aspirations of the young people on the island.

OVERALL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths:

- close working relationships between partners in the area
- a strategic vision shared between the island's partners
- broad range of post-16 provision across all 14 areas of learning
- good performance in vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3
- high participation levels post-16
- effective support for learners
- high level of support offered to providers by the LEA and the LLSC

Weaknesses:

- achievement levels below national benchmarks, particularly for 5 GCSE A*- C grades or equivalent
- the percentage of students achieving GCSE grade C or above in all core subjects
- inconsistencies in analysis of data that make comparisons between institutions difficult
- small class sizes in some subjects post-16
- poor awareness of learners about opportunities and progression pathways due to inconsistencies in information and advice

FEATURES OF THE AREA

7. The Isle of Wight, with 57 miles of coastline, is largely a rural area, of which 80% is taken up by agriculture and horticulture, and 50% is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
8. The island has a population approaching 133,000, the vast majority of whom are white British (96.8%). There is an ageing population and economic activity rates are low. Nearly 50% of the population are aged over 45 and one in four are of retirement age. 56.6% of the resident population aged 16 to 74 are in employment, compared to a national average of 60.6% (Census 2001. Crown Copyright). The current 16-year-old cohort numbers 1,577. (Isle of Wight LEA School Organisation Plan July 2003).
9. Although part of the prosperous South East in geographical terms, the island is physically and economically separated from the mainland. The geographical isolation of the island has a detrimental impact on socio-economic development. Transport is crucial to access services, including learning, and remains key to enabling learning that is accessible to all.
10. The government index of multiple deprivation (2000) shows that 15 of the 40 island wards are in the 20% most deprived wards in England, and two are in the lowest ten per cent. Deprivation is centred on the urban areas of Newport, Ryde and Ventnor, although there are also pockets of poverty in the West Wight area. There are high levels of benefit dependency. Income support claimants represent 10% of the island population compared with an average of 9% for England and 6% for the South East. (ONS) The rate of teenage pregnancy, while similar to that for England as a whole, is significantly higher than the regional figure. (ONS).
11. The school population displays characteristics similar to the socio-economic profile of the island. The latest analysis of census data by the LEA shows that the social deprivation has worsened since the 1991 census. Eighty per cent of pupils in the schools live in wards that are in the 20% most deprived nationally. The proportion of pupils in secondary schools eligible for free school meals is, at 17.5%, above the national average of 15.8%. (LEA data) The proportion of secondary school pupils with statements of Special Education Needs (SEN) in 2002 was 3.1%, slightly above the national average of 2.4% (DfES 2002).
12. Above average unemployment, low wages, a dependence on a seasonal tourist industry and emerging skill shortages, all serve to restrict growth and business competitiveness. Wages are only 74% of the regional average and nearly 50% of the working population earn less than

£10,500 a year. Unemployment remains above the regional average of 1.5%, at 2.3% (July 2003, Claimant Count). The island experiences significant cyclical 'highs' and 'lows' in unemployment due to the seasonal nature of much of the employment particularly in tourism, retail, agriculture and construction, dropping to 2.3% during the summer months and rising to 4% during the winter. There is a high proportion of part-time employment, 40% of the workforce (SE region 27%) and a high proportion of self-employed people, 14% of the workforce (SE region 8.1%).

13. Small to medium sized businesses dominate the local economy and 92% of workplaces employ fewer than 25 people (Annual Business Inquiry 2001). Levels of employment have been increasing over the past few years with more people in employment now than at any time in the past two decades. Between 1997 and 2001 employment rose by 4,500, with the main employment gains coming from retail and wholesale trade and the main losses from manufacturing. Public administration (33%) and tourism (20%) are the two most important sectors for employment (Informing our Future 2003), the latter generating an annual expenditure of over £300 million as a result of the 3 million visitors that come to the island each year. Despite recent falls, manufacturing also remains an important sector, representing 17% of all employment (Annual Business Inquiry, 2001).
14. Against a background of generally unfavourable economic indicators, the island has been having some success in diversifying the local economy through the attraction of new investment. It has been developing a role in new growth sectors of the economy, particularly in relation to composites and advanced materials. The purpose-built "Innovation Centre", the base for one of SEEDA's (South East England Development Agency) Enterprise Hubs, is a focus for the composites sector. Other important high technology sectors include aerospace and specialist electronic engineering, wind energy and other low impact technologies and the IT/communications sector. Ensuring the availability of an appropriately skilled and qualified workforce will be critical in realising the further development of these new leading sectors of the local economy. (The Island Regeneration Strategy, 2001-2005, published by the Isle of Wight Partnership).
15. The island has also been successful in attracting significant regeneration funding. Up until the year 2002, the four main Single Regeneration Budget projects for the Isle of Wight had provided a total of £11.3 million grant funding, supporting projects of a value of more than £43.6 million. (Isle of Wight Area Investment Framework. Main Report. August 2002). Further major funding has been agreed by SEEDA, with some £10 million pledged for the Cowes Waterfront regeneration project. It is anticipated

that this project will attract a further £40 million of investment from other sources. It is intended to strengthen the island's position as a centre of excellence for the composite and specialist marine sectors. (Cowes Waterfront – Investing in the Medina Valley – SEEDA, the Isle of Wight Partnership and Isle of Wight Council).

16. Levels of skills and qualifications on the island are below regional and national averages. Nearly a third of the working age population have no qualifications and nearly 50% have no level 2 qualifications, compared to a regional average of 40% (Census 2001. Crown Copyright). The Basic Skills Agency data shows that poor numeracy levels on the island stood at 24.5%, with poor literacy at 25.9%. One in four businesses on the island report recruitment difficulties, particularly in professional, managerial and technology occupations and that they must recruit personnel from the mainland or overseas in order to fill such positions.
17. Participation rates in education and training post-16 are relatively high and have gradually increased over the last three years. The number of 16 year olds staying on in education is 77.3%, well above regional and national averages. In total, 88% of 16 year olds continue in education or training (Connexions 2002). Whilst participation rates are high, overall achievement levels at 16 and 18 overall are slightly below the national average. Progression to higher education (HE) for 18/19 year olds is slightly above the national average at 20.7%, (20.4% nationally, and 22.1% in Hampshire) (DfES).
18. The proportion of Year 11 students attaining five or more GCSE A*-C passes, 45.2% is below the national average of 50.1%. (Ofsted/DfES figures for 2002) and has remained fairly static over the last five years. The average point score for GCE/VCE A/AS level qualifications is 234.2 compared with 264.3 nationally. (Ofsted/DfES figures for 2002). For other advanced qualifications, the Isle of Wight average is 91.3% compared to 81.6% nationally, achieving qualifications. This pattern continues with intermediate vocational qualifications where the local average is 82.5% compared to 71.7% nationally. (DfES 2002 Performance Tables).
19. The Isle of Wight has a three-tier school system comprising 46 primary schools (age 4-9), 16 middle schools (age 9-13) and 5 high schools (age 13-19). All of the high schools have a sixth form. The LEA also maintains two special schools and two pupil referral units. There is one non-maintained special school on the island. Two of the high schools have specialist status (a language and a sports college) and another is a designated teacher training school. There are also three independent schools on the island.

20. The high school population remains very stable. The number of 16 year olds is forecast by the LEA to fluctuate slightly around the current figure of 1,577 between 2003 and 2008, when it is forecast at 1,586. A dip is forecast for 2005, when the figure is 1,477. (LEA School Organisation plan 2003) In 2000, 67% of Year 11 students staying on in education remained in their parent school sixth forms whilst 33% moved to college.
21. The Isle of Wight College is a general further education (GFE) college offering a broad based curriculum to young people and adults. In 2002-03 the college supported 921 full and 239 part-time students aged 16-18. (Provisional - college FO4 return).
22. In 2003-04, the LLSC will contract with eight island work-based learning providers, five based on the island and three on the mainland. In 2002-03, there were 769 16-18 year old LSC-funded learners supported by island-based providers on Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships, individual NVQs and Entry to Employment (Life Skills) programmes. Mainland work-based learning providers operating on the island supported a further 106 trainees in the same year. The numbers of young people undertaking work-based learning on the island declined from 980 in 2001-02 to 875 in 2002-03.

KEY QUESTIONS/THEMES

KQ 1 How effective are the strategies for education (14-19) in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?

Strengths:

- an agreed strategic planning infrastructure
- good co-operation between the major providers of education and training

Weaknesses:

- inconsistencies in analysis of data across the range of providers
- patchy participation in work-based learning across the island

Areas for development:

- further strengthening of the strategic partnership
 - more detailed analysis of the impact of collaborative strategies
 - strengthened liaison between providers and employers
 - the need to improve further the transport infrastructure
23. The Isle of Wight has been very successful in securing post-16 participation rates in education and training well above the national average. The development of strategic partnerships has increased collaboration between providers and supported review of and improvements to the curriculum offer.
24. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has a clear view of the need to raise aspirations, improve achievement and widen participation in education and training. The overall community strategy for the island is set out in the 'Island Futures Community Strategy' document. This strategy covers a wide range of community concerns in addition to education and training and pays particular attention to environmental, economic and equality issues. The LLSC works closely with the LEA, providers of education and training and employers through the Tertiary Strategy Group (TSG) set up in 2002. The TSG is following a strategy of collaboration established in early 2002 and reinforced at their meeting in July. The group is also vigilant in exploring alternative strategies that may be implemented in the future. The Isle of Wight Local Learning Partnership (IWLP), the 'learning arm' of the LSP, has included in its business plan for 2003-04 six key objectives which include providing an independent voice to represent local learners, the community and business, and facilitating increased participation in learning and collaboration between providers.

25. The current provision of work-based learning (WBL) is variable across the island and the IWLP recognises the need to ensure that liaison between employers and providers is strengthened to identify skills gaps and deliver appropriate training. Work-based learning is offered by eight training providers. Participation in work-based learning is patchy. With the exception of the low employment area around the Needles, participation in work-based learning is high only in Ryde and central Newport. Some WBL providers and employers are involved in delivering work-related experience to 14-19 year olds on the island.
26. Local partners are beginning to analyse data relating to retention and achievement and to use this information in planning provision across the island. Improved quality assurance systems in the college and the development of a consistent quality assurance system across the schools are enabling providers to identify trends and incorporate this data in their planning. However, different methods of data collection and analysis mean that providers cannot always access comparable national benchmarks to monitor progress. The college has begun to monitor provision carefully and sets targets for recruitment, retention and success. The methodology is being refined and the overall trend in success rates is one of improvement.
27. Links between the schools, and between schools and the college, have led to developments in common timetabling, increasing the range of options open to learners whilst helping to improve cost-effectiveness. The decision to encourage young people wishing to take full GCE AS/A level programmes to do so in school rather than at college is leading to improved achievement rates. Progression for young people with learning disabilities is enhanced by co-operative ventures between special schools, secondary schools and the college. The increased collaboration is helping to forge stronger relationships between the providers. However, partners recognise that young people are not always aware of the range of options open to them. Partners recognise this issue and are aware of the need for strengthened liaison between employers and providers to maximise the effectiveness of the provision. Although there are numerous examples of collaborative efforts to rationalise and improve opportunities for young people, much of the development has to date been somewhat piecemeal.
28. The commitment of the partners to collaboration has been demonstrated by the appointment of a 14-19 co-ordinator in June 2003, jointly funded by the LEA, LLSC, Connexions and the educational institutions. This post is a key initiative in driving forward the agenda and implementing the 14-19 strategy and action plan to bring greater coherence and choice within 14-19 education and training.

29. The island is small, but transport systems are limited and journey times can be long, even over short distances. Access to distant parts of the island is difficult. In response to this, the LEA has introduced the use of 'Euro-taxis' to help students to reach the training and education that they need. Despite this useful initiative to improve the transport available for learners, it will initially be limited to post-16 students taking subjects within the 20% common timetable.

KQ 2: How well do learners achieve?

Strengths:

- strong performance in vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3
- good performance in some subjects at GCSE, GCE AS/A level
- good progression to further education and relevant employment from level 2 and 3 vocational programmes
- high retention rates in schools and a three-year trend of improving retention for students at the college

Weaknesses:

- GCSE 5 A*-C level achievement below national levels
- low levels of full completion for some WBL programmes

Areas for development:

- further improvements in retention and achievement
- raising of students' aspirations to enter higher education

30. Progression rates into post-16 education and training are well above the national average and show a three-year trend of improvement. Many students achieve well. Those with special educational needs make good progress and the performance of 'looked after' children continues to improve. Girls, in line with the national picture, continue to outperform boys, although the gap has narrowed slightly in the latest year. Overall, the GCSE A* to C pass rate has been in line with or just below national benchmarks. Overall attainment at level 2 in schools is slightly below national benchmarks, and below local targets. Some students with identified potential fail to achieve the level 2 threshold by age 16. There is strong performance in vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3, which leads to good progression to further education and relevant employment. Pass rates in some individual GCSE and GCE AS/A level subjects are very high. Overall the performance at level 3 shows continued improvement.

31. In its EDP for 2003-07, the LEA has set challenging targets for Key Stage 4. The LEA uses a range of strategies to challenge and support schools. Through comprehensive monitoring and evaluation procedures, areas of concern in curriculum provision or standards of achievement are identified and challenged. The categorisation of schools allocates time to meet specified needs and differentiated programmes of support are implemented. Support ranges from the delivery of training on the effective use of data, the establishment of curriculum groups to share and

disseminate best practice and support for a range of study and revision programmes. Schools are using a range of strategies to raise aspirations and achievement with the help of the LEA's School Improvement Team. They include individual target-setting, mentoring, study clubs, close academic monitoring, and revision programmes.

32. Although performance in a number of GCSE subjects, most notably design & technology, art, geography and history, has consistently been above the national average, overall GCSE performance in the schools at grades A* to C is below the national average but has shown a slight improvement in 2003. The percentage of pupils leaving school with no qualifications is close to the national benchmark, at 5%. With five high schools and an overall year group size of approximately 1500, under-performance in one institution can significantly affect overall LEA results and trends. Although GCSE achievements in English and mathematics remain around the national benchmark, many young people fail to achieve a pass at grade C or above in both of these core subjects. Data on added-value suggest that progress at Key Stage 4 is good or better in three of the high schools.
33. The college offers a wide range of vocational programmes at level 2 in addition to its small GCSE programme. Schools are increasingly offering vocational qualifications such as the VGCSE, AVCE and a small number of GNVQs. Numbers of students choosing a vocational option are increasing year on year. Overall, pass rates in vocational qualifications at both levels 2 and 3 across the island are above the national average. Work-based learning success rates are above the national floor targets in most sectors. In the last round of provider reviews in April, all providers save one were classed as acceptable, with success rates between 34% and 50%.
34. Participation in post-compulsory education and training on the Isle of Wight is generally good, at over 88%. Retention rates for the college have improved over the past three years and are now close to national benchmarks. Schools do not collect data on retention in the sixth form in the same format and so it is difficult to make comparisons. Approximately 75% of year 12 students in school sixth forms stay on into year 13. Some young people who embark on programmes in work-based learning fail to complete the full framework. This is particularly so for those undertaking Modern Apprenticeships.
35. Achievements in the GCE/VCE AS/A level are in line with national averages overall. Pass rates in some individual subjects have improved steadily and are above national benchmarks. The proportion of higher grades being awarded has improved in recent years. The overall average points score per student has remained below the national

average for the past four years. The figure for the college is approximately half that for the schools average. This is because no college students take a three A-level programme.

36. Schools use ALIS (The A level information system) to set targets and monitor progress. The School Improvement Team monitors school performance through its link inspector schedule of visits, school self-evaluation reports, section 10 inspections, PANDA reports and other data analysis. This is followed by appropriate intervention, support and challenge for improvement where under-performance is identified.
37. Progression to higher education (HE) is approximately 20% overall. The progression rate to HE by students who successfully complete a level 3 course at the college is approximately 30%. Increasing links with HE establishments on the mainland and the introduction of a number of HE programmes in the college in collaboration with University College Chichester will create improved opportunities on the island and is expected to lead to an increase in take-up. Young people have historically been reluctant to move to the mainland to further their education and training. The Isle of Wight Learning Partnership is working with providers, young people and their parents to promote the option of progression to higher education, but there has been limited impact so far.

KQ 3 How effective is the configuration of provision and the curricula in meeting the needs of all learners, employers and the community?

Strengths:

- a high rate of participation in post-compulsory education and training
- wide range of academic and vocational programmes
- expanded opportunities for post-14 learners
- good provision for students with learning disabilities aged 14 - 19

Weaknesses:

- the number of small groups in school sixth forms
- lack of flexibility in the delivery of some provision

Areas for development:

- more collaboration between providers of education and training to develop wider vocational options for learners
- the development of new progression pathways into HE and employment
- progression opportunities for students with learning disabilities post-19

38. More than 88% of 16 year-olds on the Isle of Wight continue their education post-16 in schools, the Isle of Wight College or with work-based learning providers on the island. The range of academic and vocational programmes available to young people is wide and encompasses GCSE, GCE AS/A levels, together with a range of vocational courses offered at levels 1- 4 and covering all areas of learning. At Key Stage 4 young people continue to take GCSEs, but there is an increasing trend for vocational options to be undertaken by learners of all abilities.
39. The curriculum is broad across Key Stage 4 in the schools. Students are encouraged to take the accreditation in as many statutory curriculum subjects as they are able to. Additional GCSE subjects are offered by all of the schools. They cover a wide range of subjects and include media studies, classical civilisation, photography and geology. In 2002, three of the schools introduced vocational GCSEs in a range of subjects. In conjunction with a youth club, one school has introduced a programme in motor vehicle maintenance which can lead to an NVQ level 1 qualification at the college. The college is playing a significant role in responding to the 14-19 agenda and has a solid network of partner school initiatives including school links, vocational tasters and work-related options. In 2002-03, the college and two of the high schools introduced a range of 2-year vocational programmes as part of the 'Increased Flexibility (14-16)

Project'. This initiative will extend to all schools in 2003-04. The project so far has proved successful, showing increased commitment and high levels of attendance by students. In 2002-03 there were 91 year 10 pupils and six courses and in 2003-04 this is planned to increase to 127 year 10 pupils and 11 courses. The work of the Education Business Partnership ensures that almost all school pupils take part in work experience before the end of year 11.

40. All five high schools have sixth forms which together provide approximately 40 subjects at GCE AS/A level. Increasing collaboration and a 20% common timetable from September 2003 aim to ensure viable groups and the continuation of vulnerable subjects such as music. However, there is still some duplication of provision and small group sizes that are not cost-effective and threaten the viability of some minority subjects. As a result of collaboration, the college has ceased to offer a full-time GCE AS/A level programme and concentrates on a wide range of vocational courses at levels 1, 2 and 3. It has also transferred sports studies to one of the high schools. The vocational options available in the college cover most areas of learning and many programmes are offered using a variety of modes of attendance. Many students following a level 3 vocational programme take a GCE AS or A level to supplement their studies. Some also take supplementary qualifications directly relevant to their main qualification, such as health and safety and food hygiene. Learners in all of the schools and the college have access to a wide range of enrichment opportunities including commercial and professional experience, sports, sports leadership, Millennium Volunteers, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Model United Nations General Assembly, overseas visits, first aid, general studies and Young Enterprise.
41. Work between the schools and college has been undertaken to overcome problems that impede greater collaboration. There is a commitment to developing as much flexibility in the delivery of provision as possible. Further work to increase the flexibility is continuing, as senior staff seek innovative solutions to issues such as timing of sessions, staffing and transport that can inhibit flexibility in timetabling. The robust ICT infrastructure is providing new opportunities to implement e-learning solutions which are being actively investigated.
42. Work-based learning providers operating on the island deliver qualifications for a range of sectors. They offer a range of programmes including Foundation and Modern Apprenticeships, NVQs and Entry to Employment (formerly Life Skills). The LSC, in partnership with the Connexions service and training providers, is reaching significant numbers of disadvantaged young people through the Entry to Employment programme.

43. Collaboration between the college and work-based learning providers has led to an expansion of vocational opportunities to help meet the needs of the island. Some aspects of the work of the provider Isle of Wight Industrial Group Training Services have been integrated with that of the college. Together with work-based learning provider Hospitality Training Partnership (HTP), the college is delivering hospitality learning to meet the needs of the island. In recognition of the seasonal pattern of employment in this sector, the college delivers hospitality training in the winter season and HTP then places students with local employers at the start of the peak tourism season, with the students returning to the college for day release. HTP, in partnership with the college, has now had its application to become a Centre of Vocation Excellence (CoVE) approved by the LLSC. The first-year implementation plan is currently awaiting approval by National Office. Should this be granted, they will move into interim CoVE status. The college is also developing a CoVE bid in care in partnership with the Care Learning Centre.
44. Strengthened links between the college and higher education institutions should encourage more students to aspire to this avenue of progression. Additional flexibility of learning is offered through the college's extensive distance learning programme. Only a few students aged 14-19 take up this option, as it requires a very high degree of motivation and maturity to work with limited academic support.
45. There is substantial provision on the island for young people with learning disabilities. There are two special schools which have been reorganised to simplify the provision offered and to make progression more coherent. Their courses are increasingly geared towards national accreditation and individual achievement. The college also offers a range of full and part-time courses for students with learning disabilities. Increasingly, these young people are undertaking courses leading to a nationally recognised qualification. However, there is a need to strengthen links with training providers to ensure continuity of provision for this often-vulnerable group as they reach adulthood. At present many students post-19 repeat years at the college because there are too few progression opportunities. The two special schools are making progress in developing flexible, accredited provision tailored to the needs of their students aged 14-19. Where possible, students participate in work experience and attend college for 'taster' vocational sessions, with a view to progressing onto accredited courses. The special schools run a range of entry level and level 1 programmes that support progression to further studies post-16.
46. In addition to its provision for young people, the LEA, supported by the LLSC and in partnership with the Isle of Wight College, runs a range of family learning and literacy programmes designed to raise achievement

in the local community, change attitudes to learning and offer accreditation to parents in their home locality. These programmes are offered in primary and middle schools across the island. Evaluation of the first year of the programme shows that the programmes are proving very effective. The family learning programme has met or exceeded most of its formal targets. More importantly, it has acted as a catalyst for cultural change, taking forward the concept that learning is an activity for all the family and that parental involvement with the school is a natural and desirable part of the education process.

47. There are two pupil referral units (PRUs) on the island, both based near Newport. The PRUs currently manage 40 Key Stage 4 students. The statutory curriculum is supplemented by a number of other subjects and learning opportunities designed to build the self-esteem and personal skills of the young people. As well as art, music and cookery and ASDAN compact club, students can also access sailing, gym, carpentry and gardening workshops and work experience is arranged for all who request it. One of the PRUs is currently working to acquire accreditation as a GCSE examination centre.

KQ 4 How effective are teaching, training and learning?

Strengths:

- teaching and learning in high schools post-16
- task-based learning in the college providing a flexible learning environment

Weaknesses:

- teaching profile at KS 4 with too high a percentage only satisfactory

Areas for development

- further improvement of teaching and learning to increase the proportion that is good or better
- the sharing of good practice and innovative developments across the island
- further improvement the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in some schools

48. The IWLP and the TSG have identified as a key strategic aim the improvement of teaching, training and learning to help to raise achievement and aspirations. Specific grants from the LEA for teacher development are well used. The LLSC has given considerable support, through the Standards Fund, to the college and WBL providers to develop teachers' and trainers' pedagogic skills. Monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning is at the heart of the quality assurance systems of all the institutions. Managers invest much time in observing teaching and learning and identifying and delivering appropriate professional development to help teachers improve their performance. An internal quality review in the college revealed that the standard of teaching and learning is improving, and is satisfactory or better in over 90% of lessons. The college is a partner in External Quality Review (EQR), a collaborative group of colleges who help to make judgements about each others' teaching performance and then share good practice.
49. Schools have continued to refine their systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. School self-evaluation tools involve an annual comprehensive review of performance in every curriculum area. A range of performance data (PANDA, Value-added data) is analysed, lesson observations are undertaken and samples of work are scrutinised by middle and senior staff. Findings are shared with staff and used to make changes to curriculum provision and delivery. The views of parents and students are fed back regularly through informal discussions and formal

avenues such as student councils and parent and student questionnaires. Well-embedded performance management systems ensure that all staff are observed annually and targets for improving their teaching are set and monitored. Schools' judgements are validated biannually by LEA inspectors through written reports.

50. The college and the WBL providers gather views of learners to help them to assess the effectiveness of teaching and training. However, some WBL providers have not yet begun to use this information to help them improve the quality of their training.
51. Two of the high schools and one of the special schools underwent section 10 inspections by Ofsted before the new framework came into force. As judged by Ofsted, teaching is at least satisfactory at compulsory level in all of the schools and is good or better in the sixth forms inspected. No secondary school in the area is in special measures or serious weakness. Recent inspection reports for the schools indicate that teachers generally have high expectations of their students. Most teachers pay sufficient attention to the reinforcement of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Inspectors found that the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching and learning could be made more rigorous in some of the schools. School teachers have access to a wide range of training opportunities, many of which are targeted at improving their skills in the classroom. Both the LEA and the LLSC have gained Investor in People recognition and all of the high schools and the majority of the WBL providers have either committed to or been recognised for the award.
52. Ofsted inspections in schools and internal quality review in the college reveal that teachers generally prepare lessons well and take into account the needs of all learners. There is some variation in the detail of schemes of work and lesson plans.
53. Key skills and basic skills are a feature of most lessons in the college, but teachers do not always signpost opportunities to reinforce key skills. College learners' achievement of key skills is above national figures and is improving annually, but many students still fail to see the relevance of key skills to their main qualification. Increasing numbers of learners receive additional support for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. There is a variety of approaches to the provision of key skills in schools, from some that enable students to access all three through discrete teaching to others offering two through other subjects. All sixth form students who have not secured a high GCSE pass or equivalent in communication or numeracy have the ability to retake GCSE English and mathematics. All schools enable access to ICT as a separate and accredited area of learning.

54. The college has been working consistently to improve the value for money of the courses it offers. In order to maintain the provision of courses in so many areas of learning for a relatively small local population, the college has introduced a system of task-based learning (TBL), which enables small, unviable classes to be taught together. This initiative is supported by a powerful commercial software package 'Blackboard' which allows staff and students to use course materials when and where they wish. On-line testing and assessment can also take place using Blackboard. Some areas of learning have been slow to use Blackboard, and rely heavily on hand-outs and work-sheets to deliver TBL. The internal quality review has shown that many students and teachers have embraced this flexible approach but that there is still work to be done in sharing good practice across areas of learning and with the schools.
55. Of the five island-based WBL providers, one has been inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) under the Common Inspection Framework, two have been reinspected, following previous inspections by the Training Standards Council (TSC), one was inspected by the TSC and the fifth has not yet received an inspection. The grades for curriculum areas in the most recent inspection/reinspection have, with one exception, been satisfactory. One provider received a grade 2 in its TSC inspection. In only one inspection has some unsatisfactory teaching been identified as a key weakness, although inspectors have also identified weaknesses in the monitoring of the quality of training in the case of this provider and two others. The quality of on- and off- the-job training varies from provider to provider, with some providers demonstrating strength in the former and others in the latter. The ALI has also judged delays in implementing or improving key skills training to be weaknesses in two of the providers.

KQ 5 How do resources affect achievement and the quality of education, training, guidance and support?

Strengths:

- significant investment in maintenance and development of the schools' accommodation
- substantial development of the college estate
- good examples of sharing of specialist facilities by the college, schools and the community
- well-qualified teachers
- effective training of staff

Weaknesses:

- no significant weaknesses identified

Areas for development:

- further sharing of specialist accommodation
 - strategies to attract and retain teachers and managers to the island
56. Significant investment in maintenance and development has provided good accommodation, including specialist facilities, in the educational establishments. Both the college, with LLSC support, and the LEA have embarked on building projects this year. The college and the schools share specialist facilities with learners and the community. Although recruitment of staff, as nationally, is a problem, the island's high schools have maintained a full staffing complement. It is acknowledged, however, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit in some specialist areas.
57. The quality of accommodation in the schools is good and adequately meets the needs of the curriculum. There has been major capital expenditure of approximately £5 million on maintenance and improvements to provide specialist facilities. Further work is planned to improve specialist facilities in drama and art in some schools, and to provide more suitable post-16 private study accommodation. Recent Ofsted reports highlight the libraries in schools as fit for purpose. Two high schools have specialist status.
58. The college is currently undertaking a major re-development scheduled to be completed in 2004. The sale of land to B & Q and a major investment by the LLSC has enabled the college to refurbish existing accommodation, and to provide new specialist teaching accommodation

and a 61-place nursery. The reception area has been improved to provide a coherent student services area and enhanced environment. Some unsightly temporary accommodation has been removed. New greenhouses have been provided for land-based education and training. Work is almost complete on a purpose-built art, design and media block, and work has recently commenced on a new learning resource centre. Since December 2001 the college has been engaged in redesigning existing accommodation to allow the development of specialist accommodation with appropriate IT and private study facilities to support TBL. IT facilities at the college are outstanding. All computers are networked, and sophisticated systems allow students and teachers to access their work from outside the college.

59. Collaboration between Quay Arts and the college is leading to efficient sharing of expensive specialist facilities such as kilns at Quay Arts, and the industry-standard specialist music production facilities of Platform One. Students on land-based courses have access to a range of specialist facilities around the island. The co-operation of the college with HTP has widened the range of catering facilities that can be used by learners. The college has commercial operations in catering, hairdressing and beauty therapy which are open to the public, and which are used extensively. Schools, particularly those with specialist status, share their facilities with a number of groups in the community. Most schools are open for a number of evenings each week and offer a range of activities from general and business language courses, community arts activities, sports programmes, homework clubs for pupils from partner middle schools, as well as a range of other community learning programmes. One of the schools has a 'Sure Start' base which encourages the re-engagement of vulnerable young people in learning.
60. Recruitment of teaching staff and managers in schools and the college has become increasingly difficult. However, teachers are generally appropriately qualified. The LEA has used high-quality promotional material and innovative recruitment strategies to enable schools to maintain a full staffing complement. The college has found increasing difficulty in recruiting specialist staff in some vocational areas such as plumbing and other building trades. There is often a high reliance on part-time teachers in these areas. However, many teachers in the college, especially those who teach part-time, have recent or current commercial or professional experience which is often used to enrich learning. Schools and the college have adequate numbers of administrative and support staff. Ofsted inspectors found that staff in schools are generally employed in a cost-effective manner. The introduction of TBL in the college has resulted in significant savings in staffing costs leading to good value-for-money.

61. All staff have access to effective specialist training. In work-based learning, the effective training of staff was identified as a strength in three of the four providers inspected. The schools have a dedicated training centre on the island which the college can access as appropriate.
62. School finances are well managed. The college has had a history of financial difficulties but under the leadership of a new principal and strengthened management team, and with support from the LSC, it is now expected to produce a surplus in the current year.

KQ 6 How well are learners guided and supported?

Strengths:

- effective induction procedures in place for all programmes
- well-established tutorial systems
- effective personal support for learners across the island
- good provision of learning support

Weaknesses:

- inconsistencies in the initial information and advice given to learners
- poor awareness by learners of the careers advice available to them
- poor awareness of learners and their parents/carers of WBL learning opportunities

Areas for development:

- raising the profile of pastoral and learning support for many learners to encourage take-up
- increasing the awareness of learners, parents and carers of careers, WBL opportunities and progression pathways to HE

63. There is a strong commitment to guiding and supporting learners in the schools and the college. All schools and the college have tutorial systems designed to help learners to plan their learning and monitor their progress. In schools, personal and social development and pastoral support are linked to raising standards.

64. Ofsted inspectors found that the arrangements for assessing, recording and reporting the progress of students is either satisfactory or good across the schools. Each student in high school is assigned a tutor. Subject teachers report on each student's progress every term. Tutors and students then measure progress against targets and then discuss any actions necessary to address problems. The suitability of courses is also kept under review. Additionally, teachers inform parents of students' achievements and progress and offer opportunities for parents to discuss this at an annual parents' evening. Where problems are identified, intervention takes place in the form of mentoring, learning support or increased involvement of parents.

65. All full-time learners in college are members of tutor groups led by specialist tutors who work exclusively in the area of pastoral and academic support. Each student is entitled to a one-hour group tutorial each week, and to a minimum of six one-to-one tutorial sessions each year to plan and monitor their progress. The college's internal quality

review found that the tutorial system is well-developed and is often supplemented by additional personal support being given to students by teachers in their own time. The outcomes of tutorials are recorded effectively. Students have not always valued the tutorial support they have been offered. The introduction of the specialist tutor role is intended to make tutorials more effective and engaging. There is some early evidence that this is a successful venture, particularly in areas such as construction and engineering.

66. Careers advice and guidance for learners aged 14 -19 are the responsibility of the South Central Connexions Service, the schools and the college. Although there are strengths in the provision, particularly for the disaffected and vulnerable students and in the PRUs and special schools, some schools continue to be critical that the service is too inflexible to respond to the needs of all. Internal quality review in the college showed that many students are ignorant of the external careers advice available through Connexions. Many did not know how to book an appointment with a careers adviser. Connexions advisers feel that they are generally used more effectively by young people in the schools than by their counterparts in the college. Ofsted inspections of schools confirm the good quality of careers education and guidance in the schools so far inspected. Careers guidance is integral to many of the vocational courses offered in the college, and students have access to the specialist knowledge of their teachers, many of whom have recent or current commercial and professional experience. School pupils and their parents have reported that they do not always receive enough information about alternative education and training opportunities available, such as work-based learning and vocational courses in the college.
67. During the summer term 2003, South Central Connexions has made a number of additional sources of information, advice and guidance available to young people. These are:
 - Connexions Information Centres in all schools
 - Connexions Direct - telephone, text, email and web-chat advice line
 - a re-developed website for the South Central area with links to a range of further sources of information
68. Additional Personal Advisers are also working with young people leaving care, those known to the Youth Offending Team, and teenage parents. A further post is funded to work with young people with mental health problems. These posts are explicitly targeted at helping those young people who have the most complex problems to re-engage with learning and employment.

69. This autumn, reviews are being undertaken of all sub-contracts that provide the Connexions service in the area. A major part of this is the VT Careers Management Southern contract, which provides the careers information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges. A self-assessment process, questionnaires completed by young people, input from earlier surveys and from other stakeholders will inform the review and enable the Partnership to develop new contract specifications. All sub-contracts will be re-tendered in the period January-February 2004, with new sub-contracts taking effect from 1 August 2004.
70. Schools and the college provide an induction period for students to introduce them to their course and the school or college. In the high schools, every student is screened on entry to ascertain their literacy and numeracy levels. They also sit the Cognitive Ability Tests, which identify levels of ability in a battery of quantitative, verbal and non-verbal tests. Students with special educational needs are placed on the school's SEN register and, depending on the level assigned, are given differentiated support. All staff receive information and guidance on strategies to meet the needs of learners with a variety of general and specific learning difficulties. All statemented students have a transitional review before they begin Key Stage 4 in order to ensure their curriculum programme is appropriate and that the support they need is identified. Support may be given, for example, through provision of a learning assistant, mentoring, additional time for basic subjects, individualised learning programmes or the provision of ICT facilities.
71. In the college, all students are screened to identify additional learning needs especially in literacy and numeracy. Those students in the college who take up the learning support offered tend to have a higher success rate in achieving their qualification than their counterparts who do not. In addition to formal learning support sessions, students in the college can use open-access workshops in literacy, numeracy and IT skills. There is also an extensive range of support materials and exercises on the college Intranet.
72. Learners in the college have access to a range of support services covering financial and personal support, including qualified counsellors. Many students have expressed their appreciation of these services in questionnaires. However, some students are not aware of the services available to them because they are not advertised sufficiently widely. The schools have introduced a wide variety of support systems that include pastoral tutor support and student services delivered by teachers and career/personal advisors provided by Connexions. Partnership agreements between the South Central Connexions service and schools clearly provide coherence of delivery. This service is recognised in all

high schools as being good. Students' comments are very positive, although further work on differentiating the service to meet the needs of learners is needed.

73. Support for work-based learners is variable in quality. There are some good examples in inspection reports of effective support for work-based learners, for example through thorough reviews of progress and effective target-setting. However, there are also weaknesses in some providers, including poor initial assessment and ineffective procedures for gathering evidence in the workplace and reviewing and recording progress.

KQ 7 How effective are the leadership and management of the partners in developing and implementing the strategies for 14-19 education and training for the area?

Strengths:

- partnership working based on openness and collaboration
- an increasingly consistent approach to quality assurance
- robust self-evaluation by college and schools

Weaknesses:

- inconsistency in data collection and analysis across the island's provision

Areas for development:

- further strengthening of the strategic relationship between the LLSC and the LEA to address achievement issues
- more consistency in quality assurance arrangements across schools, the college and WBL providers
- improved availability of comparable data to enable evaluation of the provision across the island
- better matching of learners to appropriate programmes across the island's provision
- further consideration of alternative options should the collaboration plan prove unsuccessful

74. It needs to be stated at the outset that the current configuration of 16-19 provision on the Isle of Wight contains at its heart an inherent financial instability. With a total population of 133,000 and an annual cohort of 16+ learners that fluctuates around 1500, it is difficult to maintain financial viability in a system that has so many providers recruiting from the same group of learners. Should any one provider improve its recruitment, it is likely to destabilise one or more of the others. Furthermore, the needs of the island's learners and their ability to meet the demands of employers, especially in the context of new developments in the island's economy and the government's Skills Strategy, demand a refocusing on learner, employer and community needs, rather than on the needs of individual providers.

75. To this end, key partners are working together to plan strategically to meet the needs of learners and employers on the Isle of Wight and to ensure the financial viability of the provision. The partnership between the LLSC and the LEA is strong and there is a commitment to achieving greater coherence and quality for learners. This partnership has already

generated a number of important outcomes, including greater openness between all stakeholders, a common direction and strategy directed towards achievement of national and local objectives and targets, and, most significantly, an acceptance on the part of all institutions of the need to give up some of their autonomy for the benefit of learners. The TSG, the LSP and the IWLP are working hard to raise standards and increase participation. The foundations have been solidly established. Within the overall framework of collaboration, numerous groups and partnerships are working in a highly proactive manner to address elements of the overall coherence and quality strategy. All of the partners recognise that further work is needed to strengthen collaboration and to ensure consistency in approaches to admissions, quality assurance and self-evaluation.

76. The process of taking forward a collaborative approach on the Isle of Wight only began in April 2002. (The work of the TSG is considered in greater detail in the appendix to this report). Whilst members of the TSG are, along with the LEA and the LLSC, conscious that collaboration is at an early stage of development, they are fully aware of the need to be ready to consider and propose alternative approaches if the current strategy does not appear to be producing results consistent with local and national objectives. They recognise that it will be vital for the TSG to monitor progress thoroughly and regularly to avoid delays if a change of strategy is needed.
77. Overall planning of the 14-19 provision in the area is still developing. The IWLP has a close working relationship with both the LEA and the LLSC and plays a key co-ordinating role on the island. It has been instrumental in reflecting local learner needs to the LLSC, bringing partners, including employers, together to address those needs, and organising events designed to widen and increase participation in education and training.
78. As there is no national requirement for Connexions partnerships to carry out annual surveys of the activities of young people aged 17 to 18, there is inadequate information by which the LEA can track the progression by young people after years 12 and 13.
79. In the FEFC inspection of 1999 and subsequent re-inspections, the college's quality assurance systems were judged to be unsatisfactory. The LLSC has enabled the college to use specialist support to improve its quality assurance systems over the past two years. The college's own reviews indicate strengthened quality assurance processes, soon to be tested in the forthcoming Ofsted inspection. Retention and achievement are improving, suggesting that the developments are becoming effective. Both the high schools and the college now have thorough and robust systems of self-evaluation.

80. The financial position is currently stable in all of the institutions. The college has been under substantial financial pressure for a number of years. Significant support from the LSC and a redesigned curriculum approach have enabled college managers to pay increasing attention to the cost-effectiveness of courses. The area as a whole does not yet have a consistent approach to assessing value for money in the delivery of education and training. Data collection and analysis processes are different in the institutions across the island and do not provide consistent information with which to make comparisons. Monitoring of the performance and cost-effectiveness in the area is at a very early stage of development.
81. Of the five island-based WBL learning providers whose performance was reviewed by the LLSC in April 2003, two were judged to have improved, one moving from some concerns to strong, one had moved down into some concerns, one remained in the acceptable category and the other was not categorised, due to significant management changes. Overall, the performance of island-based providers is improving. The LLSC has set clear targets for improvement, supported by the use of intervention procedures and emergency action plans for providers that are under-performing and/or have received one or more unsatisfactory grades in re-inspections by ALI. These have since been rigorously monitored and signed off by the LLSC's quality panel as fully implemented. Statistical information on recruitment, completions and achievement is rigorously collected and analysed as part of the monitoring process. WBL providers are represented in a number of strategic forums, including the TSG and the IWLP. The degree to which they are able to influence strategic developments on the island remains to be seen.
82. The college has improved its reputation with local employers, particularly in those sectors key to the local economy. In addition to the CoVE initiative, the college is the lead partner and budget holder for an LLSC funded 'Employer Learning Hub' in the growth sector of composites. This sector embraces 34 employers employing over 2,000 people. Here the college has been at the heart of defining and delivering skill needs to meet the needs of this important sector. In collaboration with the LLSC, SEEDA, the economic partnership and leading local employers, the college is also involved in the regeneration of Cowes and in particular the multi-million pound investment on the waterfront.
83. Arrangements to manage the Increased Flexibility (IF) 14-16 programme include a steering group, chaired by a senior manager from the college, on which the LSC, LEA, college and high schools are represented. It is proving effective in furthering collaboration to increase vocational opportunities for young people aged 14 –16 at level 1. There is a need

for more provision to be made available at level 2 and this is beginning to happen. The procedures for selection on the IF programme, agreed by the steering group, are thorough and involve student application forms and interviews conducted by college staff. All island high schools are fully involved with the programme. Greater emphasis now needs to be placed on the involvement of island employers and WBL providers within the IF 14-16 Steering Group.

84. As part of the drive to raise participation and achievement among young people, in 2002-03 the LLSC granted contracts to the value of £219,873 to the college, two high schools and one WBL provider on the island, in addition to their mainstream funding. This funding was to enable the providers to improve retention and achievement of their delivery of level 2, level 3 or equivalent qualifications. Providers have deployed many different strategies to meet the outcomes and objectives of the L2 and L3 initiative contracts awarded. Early indications suggest that the initiative is having a positive effect on learner motivation and is raising achievement, with the WBL provider involved meeting or exceeding all of its targets.

**APPENDIX:
THE STRATEGY FOR FUTURE 14-19 PROVISION ON THE ISLAND – THE
ROLE OF THE TSG**

85. The key problem facing the LLSC when it took over its responsibilities was the continuing difficult position of the Isle of Wight College. The college had suffered for a number of years from leadership problems, weak finances, poor accommodation and unsatisfactory standards of teaching and learning. A crisis point was reached in Spring 1999 with a poor FEFC inspection report and the departure of the then principal.
86. Actions directed towards the recovery of the college started under the FEFC but only limited progress had been made by the time the LLSC took over from the FEFC in April 2001. With robust support from the LSC, firm action by the Board of Governors and the current principal, the position of the college has improved significantly with respect to both its financial security and the quality of its provision.
87. With five school sixth forms, a GFE college and eight work-based learning providers on the island, it rapidly became clear that the LLSC needed not only to stabilise the financial position of the college but also, in partnership with the LEA, to develop and consult on a solution to post-14 learning provision on the island that would be workable, driven by the needs of learners and employers and politically acceptable to the community.
88. In June 2001 the LLSC engaged Dr Terry Melia to report to the LLSC and LEA on options for the future delivery of post-14 learning on the Isle of Wight. His report identified four options and recommended a collaborative approach to enhancing quality, remedying over-provision and responding to Government initiatives.
89. A Task Group was set up to consider how such an approach might best be pursued. The 29-member group, representing all the island's post-14 stakeholders, and informed by consultancy work undertaken by KPMG, endorsed the collaborative option. The large size of the Task Group was justified by the importance of remedying previous lack of contact between providers and engaging stakeholders in constructive debate on future provision.
90. The Task Group considered four options identified by KPMG:
- increase collaboration and integration of provision between all providers within the current organisational structure, supervised by a new Tertiary Board;

- first and middle schools reorganised into 5-11 primary schools, 11-16 secondary schools feeding into a Tertiary College which would offer all post-16 education;
 - first schools 5-9, middle schools 9-14, high schools 14-18+ with significant vocational developments 14-19. Reduce the number of 14-18 high schools from five to four. Continue to maintain the IOW College as a provider of vocational, professional, post experience and adult learning;
 - first and middle schools reorganised into 5-11 primary schools, 11-18+ secondary schools. 'Lighter' vocational work moved into schools. Some 'heavier' skills work delivered through new skills centres of a re-modelled IOW college.
91. Having considered the reports of the Task Group and KPMG, the LLSC and the IOW Council agreed to proceed with Option 1, the 'collaborative option, for the following reasons:
- immediate action would be possible to initiate changes that could improve cost-effectiveness, protect vulnerable subjects and co-ordinate post-14 provision;
 - costs would be minimal;
 - the island's existing three-tier structure was seen to be well placed to meet the Government's agenda for 14 plus reform;
 - local communities would retain their own schools, for which there is considerable local support;
 - existing travel to learn routes on the island are not conducive to a single central facility for all 16-19 students.
92. Implementation of the collaborative agenda was placed in the hands of a 12-member Tertiary Strategy Group (TSG), with members drawn from schools, the college, private providers, employers, the LEA, the LLSC and, now, the Connexions service. The Group was chaired by Professor Sir William Taylor until June 2003, when he became chair of the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Strategy Group and the chair of the TSG was assumed by Sir Peter Newsam. TSG meetings are attended by senior officers and members of the LEA and the LLSC and progress is regularly reviewed by them at their respective meetings.

93. The key task of the TSG is to advise the LEA and the LLSC on the provision of post-14 education and training for the population of the island that will:
- meet the current and emergent needs of students and employers
 - optimise the utilisation of the island's education and training estate
 - minimise duplication and overlap
 - provide value for money
 - encourage bilateral and multilateral partnerships between providers
 - enhance quality
 - improve participation, retention and progression.
94. With the support, encouragement and, where necessary, direct intervention of the TSG and officers and members of the LLSC and LEA, each provider group is now seeking to pursue an agenda consistent with these aims, entailing bilateral and multilateral collaboration, joint provision and the pooling of resources. Collaboration has included the involvement of off-Island training providers in joint discussions organised by the Isle of Wight Training Providers Association.
95. In 2002 the TSG undertook a full subject-by-subject audit of all enrolments and starts by island-based providers. This led to providers taking early action to remedy uneconomic group size, over-provision and maintaining viable provision in vulnerable areas such as modern languages and science. Agreement was reached between the schools and college to a 20% common timetable from September 2003 in which students, in addition to the subjects offered at their schools, will also have access to eleven subjects at GCE AS and A2 level offered collaboratively by the high schools. The LEA has secured funding for 'Euro taxis' to enable students to travel to the institution of their choice and has facilitated production and distribution of printed material promoting the enhanced curriculum offer to pupils and parents. The IOW College has established productive relations with selected work-based providers, involving the sharing of resources and joint teaching. The college is also negotiating with a mainland higher education institution with a view to offering island-based opportunities for progression to HE awards, a development especially relevant to widening participation.
96. The TSG developed an action plan for the period from October 2002 based on both short and medium-term objectives. The latter include a strategic vision of a comprehensive system of post-14 provision based on common curriculum planning and timetabling, joint marketing, shared resources and fullest possible integration with the work of other agencies. As part of the action plan, the TSG undertook a second subject-by-subject audit which has provided detailed information on group size, vulnerable subjects and opportunities for continued cooperation.

97. The TSG co-ordinated two bids to DfES for Pathfinder funds. These were not supported and in response, the LLSC, LEA, Connexions, the college and the high schools have jointly funded a 14-19 co-ordinator post to take forward the collaborative agenda on a full-time basis from June 2003.
98. From the outset the LLSC and LEA have supported fully the collaborative approach to resolving the problems faced by the island. The work and outputs of the TSG were reviewed and agreed at the LLSC Council meeting in January 2003 with a decision to further review progress in October 2003. This followed a similar decision by the IoW Council Executive Committee in December 2002 after their reconsideration of the original four options proposed by KPMG, including a possible re-organisation of the island's schools. Taking into account the short time in which the collaborative agenda had been in place, the progress made to date, and the costs and disruption entailed by reorganisation of the school system consequent upon development of central 16-19 provision, it was agreed that collaboration should continue to be supported. The Council now intends to review the position in Spring 2004.
99. An initial indication of the success of the collaborative approach to the planning and provision on the island will be September 2003 recruitment and the take-up by learners of the increased choice open to them through the 20% common timetabling.
100. Under its new chairman, the TSG discussed future strategy at its meeting in August 2003. One suggestion being discussed is that the LLSC and the LEA now be advised that, in any review of options for the future to be carried out over the next few months, they should confine their consideration to the first two options identified by KPMG, i.e. to pursue ways of ensuring that the present collaborative arrangements are fully developed in the manner already being explored or to re-examine the cost, practicality, and other consequences of restructuring all post-16 education on the island into one, or at most two, institutions. The implication of this is that two of the four options earlier put forward, both of which involved retaining five or six statutory providers of post-16 education, would not be further pursued.
101. The continuing work of the Tertiary Strategy Group in respect of these issues will now be reported to the *Strategic Area Review Steering Group*, set up in September 2003 in a form approved by LSC National Office in accordance with Circular 03/06.