

WMCA Adult Education Budget 2022-2025 Strategy



Contents

- 3. Executive Summary
- 4. Setting the Scene
- 7. Impact to Date
- 9. Intent
- 11. Implementation
- 17. Impact

Adult Education Budget 2022-2025 Strategy

Executive Summary

The WMCA Adult Education Budget Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the vision for a responsive and flexible adult skills offer which will support our people-centred approach to ensure that the skills needs of businesses are met and that everybody can benefit from economic growth.

Key achievements

Through devolution we inherited high levels of employability provision which showed low progression into employment, and limited links to regional employer needs. We have increased our investment in Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAP) provision, which has seen 46% progression into jobs, and have introduced Sector Gateway training to support learners to progress into employment.

Responding to the demand for higher level technical skills, a range of flexibilities have been introduced for providers to deliver more provision at higher levels and to respond to local skills needs. Delivery of Level 3 provision increased 192% from pre-devolution to 20/21, despite the pandemic impacting on delivery of provision, with increased delivery in priority areas.

Since devolution, good cooperation with Colleges West Midlands has allowed for testing and developing of new delivery models, clear communication and strategic partnership working between the WMCA and local colleges, which is positively impacting on the AEB offer.

Key priorities

In the next three years we want to ensure that we are getting our residents into employment, are upskilling and reskilling to respond to the regional economy and to net zero, are providing a good basic education up to Level 2 for those who need it, and supporting our communities to be stronger and to benefit from inclusive growth.

A responsive and flexible adult skills offer which will support our people-centred approach to ensure the skills needs of businesses are met and everybody can benefit from economic growth

- 1. Getting residents into employment**
- 2. Upskilling and reskilling to respond to the regional economy and net zero**
- 3. Provide a good basic education up to Level 2 for those who need it**
- 4. Support our communities to be stronger and benefit from inclusive growth**

We will support our residents into sustainable employment through increased investment in SWAPs, Sector Gateways, bootcamps and other employer linked programmes and will need to see increased progression into jobs from these programmes.

We will increase the amount of higher level technical provision by expanding the Level 3 - 5 technical offer in skills gaps areas to ensure we are responding to the labour market growth in higher skilled occupations.

We will collaborate with the Colleges to ensure there is good provision in place at Level 2 and below – including for English, Maths, ESOL and the digital entitlement – and ensure the vocational offer is linked to sector skills needs at level 2. Clear progression routes should be in place for provision at Level 2 and below.

We want to ensure there is a strong Community Learning offer in place, which addresses digital inclusion, family learning, sustainability and health & wellbeing. We will collaborate closely with our Community Learning partners to ensure provision aligns with progression routes into further education.

Setting the Scene



The West Midlands region has enormous economic potential. Prior to the pandemic, we experienced unprecedented growth exceeding the rest of the UK, with rising productivity, jobs and employment. But this potential is also accompanied by a number of long-standing challenges, including around low pay, skills shortages and limited social mobility.

Although qualification levels in the region have improved, they remain lower than the national average. Around 1 in 10 adults in the region have no formal qualifications, and nearly half (46%) are not qualified to level 3. As a result, employers face persistent skills shortages, with around 1 in 4 vacancies classed as 'hard to fill', particularly in roles that require advanced and/or higher skills.

The pandemic hit the West Midlands region hard. And although our economic recovery is now well underway, its strength varies considerably across different local authorities and for different groups of people. Young people and those from BAME communities have been hardest hit. Adults aged 50+ have found it harder to return to the labour market as it recovers.

Our overall employment rate is increasing, but at 74.6%, remains below both pre-pandemic levels and below the UK average (75.3%). While our unemployment rate is decreasing, the number of claimants remains stubbornly high, with a growing challenge around supporting those who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive. This shows a starker

picture when looking at the BAME unemployment rate, which went from 5.5% to 12.1% between the final quarter of 2019 and the final quarter of 2020. This means 1 in 8 BAME workers in the West Midlands are now unemployed, compared to 1 in 25 white workers.

As in many parts of the country we are seeing a high level of vacancies. Our challenge is to ensure that residents are well positioned and skilled to make the most of these opportunities. We must also equip residents for longer-term changes to our labour market including those associated with globalisation, technological advance and climate change.

The West Midlands region has enormous economic potential. Prior to the pandemic, we experienced unprecedented growth exceeding the rest of the UK, with rising productivity, jobs and employment. But this potential is also accompanied by a number of long-standing challenges, including around low pay, skills shortages and limited social mobility.

Although qualification levels in the region have improved, they remain lower than the national average. Around 1 in 10 adults in the region have no formal qualifications, and nearly half (46%) are not qualified to level 3. As a result, employers face persistent skills shortages, with around 1 in 4 vacancies classed as 'hard to fill', particularly in roles that require advanced and/or higher skills.

The pandemic hit the West Midlands region hard. And although our economic recovery is now well underway, its strength varies considerably across different local authorities and for different groups of people. Young people and those from BAME communities have been hardest hit. Adults aged 50+ have found it harder to return to the labour market as it recovers.

Our overall employment rate is increasing, but at 74.6%, remains below both pre-pandemic levels and below the UK average (75.3%). While our unemployment rate is decreasing, the number of claimants remains stubbornly high, with a growing challenge around supporting those who are long-term unemployed or economically inactive. This shows a starker picture when looking at the BAME unemployment rate, which went from 5.5% to 12.1% between the final quarter of 2019 and the final quarter of 2020. This means 1 in 8 BAME workers in the West Midlands are now unemployed, compared to 1 in 25 white workers.

As in many parts of the country we are seeing a high level of vacancies. Our challenge is to ensure that residents are well positioned and skilled to make the most of these opportunities. We must also equip residents for longer-term changes to our labour market including those associated with globalisation, technological advance and climate change.

Delivery in 2020/21 is still heavily focused on Preparation for Life and Work, making up for nearly half of the AEB enrolments. While provision in skills needs areas is increasing, we are still seeing a lack of delivery in areas such as Health Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies.

Through an increase in SWAP and higher-level provision, better links have been put in place between the provision and employer needs, but there are further steps to take to align the current provision to local economic and employer needs.

The position pre-devolution

Pre devolution, adult learning in the West Midlands was delivered by over 400 providers, with over 15% of learning delivered by out of area providers.

Driven through a national regulatory framework and linked to national priorities, provision often did not align with the local needs. Consequently, provision was determined by what a provider could deliver and often spend was on areas which were easier to deliver instead of provision linked to local skills and employer needs.

Significant amounts of provision consisted of low-level qualifications, often employability qualifications, but with limited progressions into employment. The provision focussed too much on qualifications and achievement rates and too little on impact and progression into employment. There was a very limited offer for employed adults, with little flexible learning and limited valuable training for those in work. There was limited new provision in place to respond to local and sectoral needs and limited flexibility to offer innovative learning programmes.

Devolution of the Adult Education Budget has enabled us to focus on regional economic and skills needs by retraining unemployed people and progressing them into sustainable employment, and by retraining and upskilling adults and increasing qualification levels for residents to level 3/4.



Impact to Date

Through procurement rounds, clear delivery planning and priority setting the £135m AEB budget is now delivered by a core provider base of 20 colleges, 5 Local Authorities and 42 training providers, of which many are local or specialist providers. Through realigning our provider base strong partnerships have been built with local stakeholders and collaborations with sector bodies have led to sector specific provision. Through a delivery plan approach and strong focus on level 2 and level 3 provision, we have seen increased investments in SWAP provision, Level 3 provision investment went from 4.4m pre devolution to 13.6m in 20/21 (up 209%) as well as increased investment in Construction (from 4.8m pre devo to 7.4m in 20/21), Digital (from 4m pre devo to 8.1m in 20/21) and Business & Professional (from 5.8m to 7.1 in 20/21) sector provision.

Jobs

We have increased our investment in SWAP provision, which has seen 46% progression into jobs, and have introduced Sector Gateway training to support learners progressing into employment after a short, vocationally specific training programme where there are employment opportunities but not a linked employer.

We have developed further vocational pathways for specific sectors, including Construction Gateway provision, the Health & Care Plan and bootcamps for digital and creative sectors to ensure clear pathways for progression into jobs are being delivered though our funding.

Level 3 & Sector focus

Responding to the demand for higher level technical skills, a range of flexibilities have been introduced for providers to deliver more provision at higher levels and to respond to local skills needs. Delivery increased from 1178 in 18/19 to 2,159 (+83%) in 2019/20 and up to 3444 (+192% since pre-devolution) in 20/21, despite the pandemic impacting on delivery of provision. Priority areas as construction, engineering, digital, professional services and healthcare have seen increased delivery through Construction Gateway, Digital Bootcamps and level 3 flexibilities.

Community Learning

Through close cooperation with ACLA and our Community Learning providers we have implemented Community Learning Delivery Statements and Community Learning Plans, which have supported creating a clear overview of the offer in the region. With further work ongoing to develop a clear offer linked to digital inclusion, family learning, health & wellbeing, young people and sustainability.

Collaboration & impact

Since devolution good cooperation with Colleges West Midlands has allowed for testing and developing new delivery models, clear communication with all colleges and a strategic partnership between the WMCA and the local colleges. Regular meetings with the West Midlands Provider Network and other local provider networks have enabled a close and flexible partnership with our procured providers. Cooperation with ACLA is playing a crucial role in developing the Community Learning offer in the West Midlands and ensuring the provision is well aligned with local needs. Increased engagement with community-based providers is increasing our access to local resident groups and improving resident participation.

Case Study

Provider Black Country Training Group has delivered Sector Based Work Academy Programmes (SWAP's) with great impact, with more than 65% of learners on the programme moving into sustainable employment after completing their SWAP programme. The programme is developed around job vacancies provided by the employer, and the individuals receive occupational specific pre-employment training, work experience and a guaranteed interview at the end of the training. BCTG has delivered SWAP programmes in the IT and the Health & Social Care sector, working closely together with local employers to provide a solution to their recruitment challenges. BCTG will be expanding the SWAP delivery into other sectors as part of the new £9m SWAP Consortium programme.

Collaboration & impact

Since devolution good cooperation with Colleges West Midlands has allowed for testing and developing new delivery models, clear communication with all colleges and a strategic partnership between the WMCA and the local colleges. Regular meetings with the West Midlands Provider Network and other local provider networks have enabled a close and flexible partnership with our procured providers. Cooperation with ACLA is playing a crucial role in developing the Community Learning offer in the West Midlands and ensuring the provision is well aligned with local needs. Increased engagement with community-based providers is increasing our access to local resident groups and improving resident participation.



Case Study

Through Level 3+ flexibilities, colleges have been able to offer a wide range of fully funded higher level provision to learners. In collaboration with Colleges West Midlands a list of fully funded Level 3 provision was agreed, and additional higher level qualifications have been approved where aligned with sector skills needs and priority areas.

Solihull College has been able to support learners with their journey towards employment by providing a comprehensive Level 3 offer. The college has been offering a wide range of level 3 and higher provision through using the level 3 flexibilities. Learners have been able to benefit from courses such as AAT, HR or Hairdressing.

One learner for who the opportunity to enrol on a level 3 qualification has been great for is Lisa, a stay at home mum, for who WMCA funding meant that she could continue her level 3 studies free of charge. Once she has completed level

3, she intends to become a licensed bookkeeper and realise her objective of running a bookkeeping business from home

Intent

The WMCA Adult Education Budget Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the vision for a responsive and flexible adult skills offer which will support our people-centred approach to ensure the skills needs of businesses are met and everybody can benefit from economic growth.

Businesses in the West Midlands face skills gaps and the economy has been impacted by the pandemic. People with lower levels of education and those belonging to minority groups are often not able to find sustainable employment. Young people and those over 50 have been significantly impacted by the changing employment market and economy. Through improving the skills of local people by upskilling and reskilling to ensure they have the necessary qualifications and skills to meet the skills needs of businesses, resident's quality of life will improve.

Adult skills form an important part of the region's economic development and a strong adult skills offer will support the plans to deliver an improvement in productivity in the West Midlands while improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the area. As part of this approach the Jobs Plan has been launched to create 100,000 jobs in the West Midlands. To deliver this plan, it is crucial to collaborate with both the public and private sector, to support job creation through projects such as HS2, housing, transport infrastructure and the Commonwealth Games. Our colleges, Local Authorities and independent training providers have a vital role to play in delivering an adult skills offer to recharge the economy and support residents into work.



Our intent for 2022 onwards is simple, getting residents back into employment, upskilling and reskilling to respond to regional needs, providing good basic education up to level 2 and ensuring we are supporting our communities and community learning.

- We will focus on ensuring our provision is supporting residents into sustainable employment, through SWAPS, Sector Gateways, bootcamps and other employer linked programmes.
- Upskilling and reskilling our residents is crucial to respond to economical and employer needs. We will focus on increasing the amount of higher level technical provision, through investment in Level 3+ provision, expanding our level 4/5 technical offer in skills gaps areas and through a flexible and innovative approach to provision for those in employment.
- We will ensure a good basic skills offer, with clear progression routes, is in place to include ESOL, Digital Entitlement, English and Maths, but also a clear vocational offer linked to sector skills needs at level 2.
- Through Community Learning and the new Community Fund we will aim to create a strong community learning offer which includes digital inclusion, family learning, sustainability and health & wellbeing, with clear progression routes into further education.



Implementation

Jobs

SWAPS & Sector Gateways

We expect to see an increase in investment and enrolments over the next 3 years to 20% of the Adult Education Budget and introduce simplified standard rates for SWAP and Sector Gateway provision, with a minimum of 65% of enrolled learners progressing into jobs.

Impact of SWAP provision will be managed through a place-based approach to jobs. In collaborating with Local Authorities, employers and sector bodies we will be responsive to gaps in provision. Through timely performance management on the outcomes against targets, underperformance will be managed early on. Clear management of funding will ensure value for money, where providers do not deliver against the agreed outcomes, funding will be moved towards providers successfully delivering SWAP provision.

Bootcamps

Bootcamp delivery has shown to be effective for higher level skills needs in the Digital and Creative sectors. We will be further encouraging flexible and innovative bootcamp delivery in other sectors through flexibilities and will work together with our providers to develop and test additional sector specific bootcamps, specifically around healthcare, green technology and retrofit.

Sector Plans

Sector specific provision plans have been developed in collaboration with sector bodies for Health & Care and Construction in order to align the existing provision to the employer needs and skills gaps. Through further collaborations with sector bodies and providers we will be developing and testing further sector plans aligning provision to local economic skills gaps and employer needs. We will specifically focus on developing clear prospectuses on engineering & manufacturing, business & professional and green & sustainability provision in the area and work together with our providers to develop innovative provision aligned to the Jobs Plan in this area.



Current gaps

We will continue to work with our colleges on the current gaps in destination and progression data for learners, to ensure the progression and impact of provision is clearly measured and will feed into further development. An intelligence led data set across our partners is crucial in helping to better inform and shape our actions, priorities, and understanding our resident community groups.

Upskilling

Level 3

The need to increase investment in higher level skills is evident, with an increasing need to have residents upskilled to level 3 and 4 to align with employer needs and job roles in the science, technology and engineering-based occupations particularly. A key feature of labour market change has been growth in higher skilled occupations including management, professional and technical jobs. Collaboration with the FE and HE sector is crucial to ensure a good higher-level offer is in place. This should include a good and flexible offer for those in work with clear progressions and impacts.

To increase higher level provision and job outcomes, WMCA will continue to work with Colleges to further develop the Level 3+ portfolio and offer to residents. We expect higher level provision to become more flexible and more aligned with occupationally specific progression pathways and with market demand. A clear offer for those in work will need to be developed which includes flexible and diverse delivery modes and aligns with the skills and development needs of employed learners. Over the next 3 years we expect to see a minimum of 20% of provision for grant providers on level 3 and above, we are shifting the balance of provision to ensure the right balance in the adult education offer.

Through a procurement exercise the WMCA will invest in additional higher-level provision, focusing on current gaps in higher level provision and specialist delivery.

Level 4/5

To ensure there is a Level 4 offer in each Local authority, linked to the local skills gaps and technical employer needs we will continue to test standard funding of Level 4 and 5 provision in technical skills shortage areas.

Digital

The current capacity and capability of regional providers, and specifically the FE sector, is not in a suitable position to respond to higher level digital needs from employers.

The current gap in higher level (L3+) employer linked provision is being delivered through procured digital bootcamp provision by specialist providers. Digital bootcamps will become the main high-level digital provision route within AEB through an additional 7m/year investment from 2021-24 and through a review and movement of existing Level 2/3 digital funding into the Digital Retraining bootcamp model.

Providers delivering Level 3 digital provision are expected to refocus and align their Level 3+ funding to the bootcamp provision and include clear KPI's on progression into jobs and link provision to available vacancies. We will continue to work with our providers to ensure a good higher-level digital offer is in place.

Current Gaps

The current offer is showing several gaps which will be addressed through performance management, new provision and procurement.

- Higher-level provision will need to be increased in all local authority areas to ensure a good balanced offer is in place. There is a good basic coverage of higher-level provision across the Black Country, however provision is patchy in areas of Birmingham and Coventry. In all areas a wider offer would benefit residents.
- There is an emerging need for green high-level technical provision throughout the West Midlands, which we aim to address through clear sector propositions and the focus on testing new provision and bootcamps, aligned with the new WMCA Green Strategy.
- Post devolution has seen a consistent uptake of delivery by BAME residents, equating to around 65% of AEB provision for 2020/21 funding year, however this figure drops down to 52% for uptake of Level 3 provision. We need to address the lower uptake of higher-level provision by BAME residents by tailoring our offer to the needs of specific resident groups.

Basic Education

English & Maths

The WMCA investment in the English and Maths is significant with circa £19m allocated in 2020/2021. It is important that English and Maths entitlement is balanced with the other provision in local authority areas through ESF and other funding and for provider allocations to ensure a comprehensive offer for residents is in place. We will need to make our offer more accessible and ensure that it is better aligned to opportunities to progress into employment and further learning. The alignment of English and Maths provision to vocational areas and good IAG processes are needed to ensure provision is supporting residents with their journey towards employment. We will collaborate with our colleges to ensure that a minimum of 25% of all English provision is vocational.



ESOL

Through developing an 'ESOL for employment' offer in major employment sectors in line with the ESOL – Unlocking Potential report recommendations we can develop resident's language skills in line with the needs of the job market. Through embedding ESOL in vocational provision instead of a stand-alone approach we can ensure the ESOL needs of residents are met. Through ensuring flexible delivery models and an online ESOL offer we aim to reach those residents who are not currently engaged and require a different model of delivery.

We will be setting clear expectations with Grant Providers that a minimum of 25% of ESOL provision they deliver should be vocational ESOL.

We expect Community Learning providers to have offers of both regulated ESOL provision across the levels and non-regulated ESOL provision to support residents progression to further learning and work. Additionally, we expect community learning providers to establish flexible and online ESOL delivery models. We want Community Learning providers to provide a high-quality offer of ESOL to support personal and social development and expect ESOL provision to be visible through the community settings where community learning takes place.

Digital Entitlement

Digital entitlement is part of basic digital skills, which will be delivered through both Community Learning and Adult Skills provision. With regards to basic digital skills up to Level 2, the WMCA digital skills entitlement list will be reviewed and from 2022/23 onwards, for Entry Level provision up to Level 2 provision, only qualifications which form part of the WMCA digital entitlement will be funded. It is expected that grant providers will be delivering basic digital skills in line with the digital entitlement list.

There is a significant level of free provision available which covers elements of basic digital skills and we will need to ensure the digital provision offered is aligned to the free training and provision available and facilitate introductions between providers of free provision and possible progression pathways.



Entry Level to Level 2 Provision

Entry Level provision outside of English and Maths should be delivered in the main through community learning, which plays a vital role in the delivery of lower-level provision, access, and progression.

Level 1 provision outside of English, Maths, ESOL and Digital Skills should be occupationally specific. Where level 1 provision is not part of a sector gateway, Digital entitlement, or aligning with the Sector Skills Plans, we will need to see a clear link between the occupationally specific training at Level 1 and progression routes into employment or further training at Level 2 and above. We expect to see the majority of level 1 provision aligned to sector-based work academy provision of pre-employment training to support individuals into work. A review of Level 1 provision will ensure that qualifications or programmes which do not lead to clear progression routes are no longer funded and only vocational specific training with clear progression routes are funded.

The WMCA values provision at level 2 in providing individuals the opportunity to develop core occupational skills, in addition it provides the opportunity for progression to level 3 technical qualifications which are key to support productivity and the growth of the economy. We will focus on ensuring that provision funded at level 2 enables progression to further learning and provides the opportunity to move to better paid jobs. To ensure that we are focusing our funding on the qualifications that give residents the best chance of progression we will continue to fund courses at published rates where these are either listed as entitlement qualifications or are aligning with skills and employer needs. We will seek to review all provision at Level 2, which doesn't show clear progression routes into higher level skills provision or employment. This includes a review of short course distance learning that add little value and impact for both the resident and the local economy.

We will work together with our Further Education and Community Learning providers on a place-based approach towards the delivery of basic skills, to ensure provision meets local need.

Communities

Community Learning

Through increased collaboration with our Community Learning providers and ACLA, we want to develop a strong, place-based community learning offer for our region. Through the development of a new Community Learning Framework, we aim to align the local Community Learning strategies to the local council plans. We want to see a clear digital inclusion offer, a new and innovative approach to family learning, an impactful health & wellbeing offer, clear youth focussed provision and a new green /sustainability offer for the community. We will introduce outcome frameworks for Community Learning provision to clearly demonstrate outcomes for residents and will work with our providers on this.

Basic digital skills delivery will be delivered through both Community Learning and Adult Skills provision. Through Community Learning we can cater to the need for our residents to improve both skills and confidence in their digital proficiency at home and the workplace. With a shift to both home learning and home working, its paramount that we accelerate the take up of the digital entitlement in community learning. Over the next three years we want to see our Community Learning investment in basic digital skills for residents increase from 10% to 20%. Working in partnership with both our Community Learning providers and ACLA is crucial for the development of basic digital skills as a main pillar of community learning.

An innovative approach to family learning, with a clear focus on engagement of young people and intergenerational unemployment should be developed in collaboration with local stakeholders.

Health & Wellbeing is an increasingly important aspect of Community Learning, with mental health concerns on the rise. We welcome an innovative and tailored approach to Health & Wellbeing provision, which includes a clear focus on mental health for young people.

In some areas Community Learning provision has been mainly focussed on older adults, without a clear programme for engagement with young people. With the pandemic having significantly impacted the levels of youth unemployment the role of Community Learning providers in engaging with young people and getting them back into learning and employment is crucial. A clear offer in each local area focussed on young people is therefore essential.

Green and sustainability provision is not only technical higher-level provision but needs to be reflected in the community approach to the environment and climate change. We want to collaborate with our Community Learning providers to ensure green/sustainability provision for the community is in place across the region.

Community Fund

The Community Fund is an £1m fund which is investing in innovative community-based provision focussing on green/sustainability provision, STEM, digital provision and other skills need areas, with clear employer involvement and a focus on specific resident groups including young BAME, women returners and over 50's. We are working with organisations with a strong connection to local communities who might not have been able to deliver under AEB through other routes. We seek to continue to support local community programmes through further procurement or grant funding.

Learner Support

We will continue to support learners with financial hardships or learning difficulties through the Adult Education Budget, as we have done throughout the initial 3 years of devolution. With regards to SEND provision, we will work together with our Local Authorities and the Department of Health & Social Care to establish a clear policy on funding SEND provision for adults.



Impact

How will we achieve this?

Current providers

We will continue to collaborate with our current provider base to ensure we shift provision to meet the local needs and develop new and innovative delivery models.

- We will agree delivery plans and work with our providers to manage performance, outcomes and impacts.
- We will move funding where delivery is not showing positive destinations for learners. For SWAP and Sector Gateway provision we are expecting monthly updated destination data.
- We will pilot 3-year funding allocations and innovative delivery models with some providers to test out effectiveness and the impact on changing provision to align with regional and local needs.
- We will move towards simplified delivery plans for 'out of area' colleges, which will include main headings and priority areas.
- We will test new approaches for 'on-going' problems, issues which have been difficult to address, like youth unemployment.
- We will collaborate with our providers to determine a new approach to 'employed' provision outcomes and reporting.
- We will work together with providers on future plans for the region and collaborate on attracting additional investment to the region.

Other stakeholders

We will continue to collaborate closely with our local stakeholders, including DWP and Local Authorities to work towards a place-based approach for our local communities. Collaboration with Colleges West Midlands, the West Midlands Provider Network and ACLA has been crucial in successfully delivering the Adult Education Budget and we will continue to work in close partnership. We will work to strengthen our employer and sector body collaboration to ensure provision will increasingly be aligned to economic and employer needs.

We will continue to work with DfE to share best practice and look to ensure we can maximise the impact and alignment of national and regional programmes.

Procurement

Through new procurements in 2022 and onwards we will focus on procuring training provision differently. Our approach will focus on procuring local based packages of provision, focussed on jobs, higher level technical provision and innovative approaches to training. We aim to procure gaps in provision offered by the current provider base, focus on sector specific gaps and specific communities or resident groups. We will increase our focus on local providers to deliver to our residents. The procurement exercise which will be launched in January 2022 and will have an approximate value of £60m+ over 3 years.



Impact

The outcomes and impact we want to achieve in the next 3 years are focussed on getting residents into jobs, upskilling our residents and engaging our communities. Although we are setting expectations on progressions into jobs and learners in high-level training, not all impacts can be easily measured. For community learning provision or looking at progressions for employed learners, we need to develop a clear outcome framework which includes 'softer' outcomes as well.

Jobs & Pre-employment provision

We want to see an increase in the numbers of residents getting into sustainable employment, with an increase in SWAP and Sector Gateway delivery as the main pre-employability provision and increased progression outcome from these programmes. We want to see an increase in the delivery of current higher level bootcamp models and the development of further bootcamp models for other sectors. We expect the investment in SWAPs, Sector Gateways and Bootcamps to be 10-15 % of the overall budget.

Upskilling – Level 3 & higher-level skills

We are expecting to see an increase in the numbers of residents being upskilled to level 3 and above, with an increasing investment in higher-level provision over the next 3 years. We expect the investment in higher level provision (level 3,4 & 5) to take up approximately 20% of the budget.

A clear and flexible in-work offer for employed residents with clear progression should also be developed and implemented.

Basic Skills Provision

A good basic skills offer should include clear alignment to vocational provision within the English and ESOL offer. We are expecting to see at least 25% of the Adult Skills ESOL offer to be a vocational ESOL offer.

With regards to the Level 1 and 2 offer, we are expecting clear alignment to the sector plans within the offer, with clear progression routes to employment and/or further education or training.

Community Learning

With the introduction of an outcomes framework for Community Learning provision we will be able to measure both progression, soft skills and distanced travelled which will give us greater insight into the impact Community Learning provision can provide for residents of the West Midlands. We expect the Community Learning budget to remain at similar levels (£15m) but see a shift in the profile of delivery with clear outcomes for learners.

