

## Landex Member Briefing – May 2019

The Further Education World is still overshadowed by news of Colleges getting into financial difficulties, poor inspection outcomes, an increasing number of merger proposals, and high-profile principals resigning their posts. Whilst the majority of Landex members have been unaffected by such events, it has certainly affected some and it remains a priority for Landex to work hard to protect the sector's reputation.

The preparations for Brexit also continue to generate a level of uncertainty that has made it difficult to progress a number of initiatives on behalf of the sector.

The EU has now agreed on an extension to the Article 50 process up to 31st October. During this period, the UK will continue to enjoy the full rights and responsibilities of EU membership. While this provides some welcome breathing space, the government continues to produce guidance and information relating to the UK's exit from the EU and the possibility of exiting without a deal.

### 1.0 Landex '*Land based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence*' Ltd.

At the 2018 AGM held in November, Russell Marchant and Amanda Burnside were elected to serve a second year as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

The current composition of the Board is:

#### National Directors

Tim Jackson, Principal, Sparsholt College.

Amanda Burnside, Principal, Wiltshire College.

Jo Price, Vice-Chancellor, Royal Agricultural University.

Russell Marchant, Vice Chancellor/Principal, Hartpury University/College.

Alison Robinson Principal, Myerscough College.

Jeremy Kerswell, Principal, Plumpton College.

#### Regional Directors

*South West:*

Phil Le Grice, Principal, Duchy College.

*London & South East:*

Malcolm Goodwin, Principal, Capel Manor College.

*North West:*

Marcus Clinton, Principal, Reaseheath College.

*West Midlands:*

Angela Joyce, Principal, Warwickshire College Group.

*East & East Midlands:*

Dawn Whitemore Principal, Brooksby Melton College

*North & North East:*

Marcus Clinton, Principal, Northumberland College.

*Yorkshire & North East*

Suzanne Duncan, Principal, East Durham College.

#### N.Ireland, Scotland and Wales

Martin McKendry, Director, CAFRE, N.Ireland

## **1.1 Landex Committees**

The Landex Board continued to be supported by a committee structure:

- Higher Education Committee chaired by Jo Price, Vice Chancellor of Royal Agricultural University.
- Further Education Curriculum and Quality Committee chaired by Tim Jackson, Principal Sparsholt College.
- Finance and Funding Committee chaired by Lynne Forrester-Walker, COO, Hartpury University and Graeme Lavery, Director of Finance, Reaseheath College.
- Learning Materials and Technology Committee chaired by Marcus Clinton, Principal of Reaseheath College.
- Membership & Remuneration Committees chaired by Russell Marchant, Vice Chancellor/Principal, Hartpury University/College.

## **1.2 Landex Offices**

The Landex offices are now well established at the University of Northampton's Avenue Campus. The move was necessitated by the University opening a new 'Waterside Campus' in the centre of Northampton and selling its Park Campus for residential development. The registered office for all the companies administered by Landex is now the Portfolio Innovation Centre.

## **1.3 Partnership with GuildHE**

Landex members continue to benefit from a very cost-effective annual agreement with GuildHE; the advice provided by the GuildHE team is invaluable, and members respond positively to the access that this arrangement provides to GuildHE publications. The availability of high quality meeting space for Landex meetings within the GuildHE offices in Tavistock Square, is an additional benefit of the partnership. The Chief Executive, Gordon McKenzie continues to be supportive of both the organisation and individual members, as well as being an important contributor to the annual Landex Conference. [www.guildhe.ac.uk](http://www.guildhe.ac.uk)

## **1.4 Partnership with the Association of Colleges**

For the last six years, the subscription methodology has reflected a joint membership agreement with the Association of Colleges (AoC), whereby Landex undertakes some of the functions that would otherwise fall to the AoC. This has ensured that the Landex subscription, for those in joint membership, has remained at a modest level.

The AoC and Landex have committed to working closely together, to ensure that Landex members receive the highest level of support as specialist designated land-based colleges, and a new joint memorandum of understanding was signed at the end of 2018.

Suzanne Duncan represents Landex members on the AoC Board, and Jeff Beer OBE represents members on the Governors' Council.

[www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)

## **1.5 Rural Services Network and SPARSE - RSN**

Landex continues to belong to this organisation, which as a consequence offers free membership to all Landex members. [www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk)

## 1.6 AgriFood Charities Partnership (AFCP)

AFCP's overall aim is to promote education and research in agriculture and food production, by supporting charities that are working in the discipline, to make better use of their funds. Charities that fund research or education are not always as well informed of the wide range of initiatives that exist to support agriculture & food production as they could be. Hence AFCP believes that charities can achieve greater effectiveness by appropriate collaborations, either with other charities or other organisations e.g. universities, colleges, research organisations. Landex works with AFCP to promote knowledge and understanding of the capability and capacity of its members by funding charities.

Landex's membership of this organization will entitle all Landex Colleges and Universities to free membership of AFCP. [www.afcp.org.uk](http://www.afcp.org.uk)

## 1.7 Applied Research and Knowledge Exchange Prospectus

The second phase of this project was completed early this year and the publication of printed and web versions of a second prospectus are widely available. Like the first prospectus, it was exceptionally well received and has helped to raise awareness of the research capacity and work currently undertaken by Landex Colleges and Universities. [www.landex-research.org.uk](http://www.landex-research.org.uk)

## 1.8 Consultations

There have been many consultations over the last 6 months. Since the start of the year Landex has completed the following on behalf of members:

- **Subject:** DfE Funding increases to teachers' pensions employer contributions  
**Closing Date:** 12th February 2019
- **Subject:** DfE Provider funding for the delivery of T Levels  
**Closing Date:** 19th February 2019
- **Subject:** Independent review of TEF: call for views  
**Closing Date:** 1st March 2019
- **Subject:** Ofsted Education Inspection Framework  
**Closing date:** 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- **Subject:** Consultation on the fees charged by QAA  
**Closing Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019

A number are currently open, and as always we encourage all members to respond individually as well as contributing to the Landex response.

- **Subject:** DfE Allocations methodology for the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary scheme  
**Closing date:** 23rd May 2019  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/16-to-19-discretionary-bursary-fund-allocation-methodology>

- **Subject:** DfE Review of post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below in England  
**Closing Date:** 10th Jun 2019  
<https://consult.education.gov.uk/post-16-qualifications-review-team/post-16-level-3-and-below-qualifications-review/>
- **Subject:** DFE Further Education Workforce Data Collection  
**Closing Date:** 11th June 2019  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/786680/FEWorkforceDataCollection\\_Consultation2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786680/FEWorkforceDataCollection_Consultation2.pdf)

## 1.9 STEM Status for Land Based Subjects

Landex continues whenever and wherever possible to reinforce the importance of land based disciplines at FE level being recognised as STEM subjects. It is encouraging that a number of other organisations have now discovered the importance of this recognition, and although it might have been helpful if their representations had built upon the case researched by Landex, any promotion of the issue can only be helpful.

## 2.0 Land Based Learning (LBL) Ltd.

Land Based Learning is a wholly owned subsidiary of Landex and considerable development has taken place over the last 12 months.

The LBL Board has been strengthened by the appointment of additional members who will join, Marcus Clinton (Chair), Andrew Bailey and Chris Moody as directors, and extend the range of current curriculum and technical expertise around the table

Dawn Whitemore – Principal, Brooksby Melton College

Claire Whitworth – Vice Principal, Hartpury College

Ursula Bailey – Learning Technology & Resource Manager, Sparsholt College

Jeremy Kerswell – Principal, Plumpton College

## 2.1 DfE Flexible Learning Fund

The aim of the Fund is to develop and expand the evidence and insight into the effectiveness of scalable learning delivery methods that make learning more attractive and easier to access for adults. This evidence will be used to develop future Government policy and will provide examples of best practice that can be drawn upon by the adult learning sector. There are three key instrumental objectives of the pilot:

- To encourage flexible and accessible learning delivery to maximise adult participation and attainment – especially by those not in employment:
- To encourage collaboration between providers, employers, and other relevant organisations in meeting national and local skills needs:
- To evaluate projects to understand which are effective and create examples of best practice:

Landex and the National Land Based College (NLBC) applied to the Flexible Learning Fund with the explicit support of 15-member colleges, a technology partner, employers/employers' groups, and awarding bodies - City and Guilds and the Royal Horticultural Society.

The successful application had a total value of £725,854, which included £165,050 of in-kind funding, predominantly provided by Land Based Learning Ltd and relating to the use of the its Moodle platform.

Two qualifications were submitted for development:

- City and Guilds - Level 2 Certificate of Competence in the Safe and Responsible Use of Veterinary Medicines
- Royal Horticultural Society - Level 3 Certificate in Practical Horticulture

The project commenced in May 2018. An inception meeting, involving the key stakeholders, agreed the structure that would be used to deliver the project, including who would be responsible for the different aspects of the development.

Following a very successful and competitive tendering process AdaptiVLE Ltd, based in Skipton, North Yorkshire were selected to develop the platform and First Media Ltd, based in Louth, Lincolnshire were selected to develop the learning materials.

The college delivery partners commenced marketing within their normal cycle of course promotion in September 2018. The central marketing campaign commenced in January 2019 supported by traditional and electronic marketing materials which were developed by First Media Ltd.

It had initially been felt that the development of the materials would take place on a linear basis one module after another. While some aspects of this approach remain valid it became clear during the project that many of the development activities had to take place on a parallel basis.

The Veterinary Medicine course and the first two modules of the Horticulture course are now available on the platform, although additional video editing and proof reading needs to be completed before the courses are released to the partner providers. The remaining Horticulture modules, which are in various stages of production, will follow the initial release once suitable review and quality assurance checks have taken place.

Initial recruitment of learners has been challenging, however, the delivery partners are looking to intensify their marketing efforts and remain confident that starts will grow incrementally as awareness of the flexible materials increases.

## **2.2 Moodle Platform**

Rather than further developing the current Platform it was decided that a better approach would be to develop a new Moodle Platform that would accommodate all the current LBL materials in addition to those developed using the Flexible Learning Fund monies. It has the same domain address as the old platform and takes advantage of its enhanced technical features the materials will be securely hosted by AdaptiVLE.

## **2.3 Pdf Packs**

The pdf packs in the lbl.global website library had out-dated branding, including an old company name. In addition, it is some years since the content of the materials had been technically reviewed and updated. The LBL board have approved the rebranding of over 550 packs, and this work will be complete by July 2019.

## **2.4 Conversion of pdf Packs to interactive format**

Building upon the work that took place with horticulture materials in 2017/18, additional funding has been approved to develop a further 25 pdf packs into interactive format and this work will be complete by July 2019.

Following a survey of LBL Members the Agriculture, Animal Management; and Countryside curriculum areas have been selected for the next stage of development.

## **3.0 Land Based Assessment (LBAL) Ltd.**

The company was established and funded by 16 Landex members to ensure that there is complete coverage of all land based apprenticeship standards, whatever the size of the cohort.

The initiative is managed under contract by Landex, with LBAL members wherever possible providing the assessors and assessment sites.

The company is working closely with Lantra, an approved End Point Assessment Awarding Organisation (EPAO), which will provide the independent validation and quality assurance functions.

The project is overseen by a Board comprising:

Tim Jackson (Chair) – Principal Sparsholt College

Suzanne Duncan – Principal, East Durham College

Alison Robinson – Principal, Myerscough College

Mandie Stravino – Principal, Derby College Group

Malcolm Goodwin – Principal, Capel Manor College

Tim Middleton – Vice-Chancellor, Writtle University College

Roger Clarke – Team Lead for Work Based Agriculture, Cornwall College Group

Sandra Burnhill – Executive Director Quality & Standards, Askham Bryan College

Lantra has been approved to deliver end-point assessment for 15 Land Based Apprenticeship Standards and as such the partnership has the broadest end-point assessment offer for the Land Based Sector.

## **3.1 Materials development**

Materials Development Groups have completed the authoring of end point assessment materials for Land Based Engineering Service Technician (Level 3) and Sports Turf Operative (Level 2). A further four Development Groups are currently working and five are about to start.

In addition to knowledge questions, practical tests and professional discussion guidelines, the Development Groups prepare specific guidance for each standard to help providers prepare their apprentices for assessment.

The development schedule is shown below:

| <b>STANDARD</b>                           | <b>GROUP STATUS</b>  |
|---|----------------------|
| Land Based Engineering Service Technician | Completed            |
| Sports Turf Operative                     | Completed            |
| Horticulture and Landscape Operative      | Complete April 2019  |
| Arborist                                  | Commenced April 2019 |
| Animal Care and Welfare Assistant         | Starting May 2019    |
| Equine Groom                              | Complete May 2019    |
| Golf Greenkeeper                          | Commenced March 2019 |
| Land Based Service Engineer               | Starting May 2019    |
| Forest Operative                          | To be scheduled      |
| Stockperson                               | Starting May 2019    |
| Crop Technician                           | To be scheduled      |
| Packhouse Operative                       | To be scheduled      |
| Fence Installer                           | Commenced April 2019 |
| Poultry Technician                        | Starting May 2019    |
| Poultry Worker                            | Starting May 2019    |
|   |                      |

### **3.2 Assessment**

The first assessments took place in February 2019, when 16 Land Based Engineering Service Technicians were assessed.

The forecast number of end-point assessments by LBAL members indicates significant growth in future years, and third party enquiries indicate that this number is likely to increase significantly when the wider market is considered. The growth of assessor capacity remains a priority for LBAL and a recent board decision to engage Independent Assessors directly has allowed LBAL to increase capacity and work in some occupational areas that otherwise would not have been possible.

### **4.0 National Land Based College (NLBC) Ltd.**

Following a challenging develop period, NLBC is currently being managed under contract by Landex. The company is now generating a modest surplus and it is anticipated that this position will strengthen during 2019/20.

#### **4.1 Board Membership**

At its AGM, NLBC members recognised that there would be distinct benefits associated with extending Board membership to College/University Deputies as well as Principals/Vice-Chancellors. Dr Becky Taylor, Assistant Vice Chancellor at the Royal Agricultural University is the first such appointment and will formally join the board in July 2019. Further nominations as Board members are still sought both from providers and employers.

The current directors are

Amanda Burnside, Principal, Wiltshire College  
Marcus Clinton, Principal, Reaseheath College  
Beverley Dixon, Group HR Director, G's.  
Kirstie Donnelly, Managing Director, City & Guilds.  
Tim Jackson, Principal, Sparsholt College.  
Jeremy Kerswell, Principal, Plumpton College  
Jane King, Chief Executive, AHDB.  
Richard Longthorp, Farmer & Chair AgriSkills Forum.  
Russell Marchant, Vice-Chancellor, Hartpury University & College  
Charles Matts, Director, Brixworth Farming Company  
Chris Moody, Chief Executive, Landex.

## **4.2 Skills Senior Leadership Group**

Three members of the Senior Leadership group sit on the NLBC Board.

Whilst the group is only focussing upon agriculture and production horticulture, it is important that NLBC remains aligned with the objectives of both the Food and Drink Sector Council and the work of the Skills Senior Leadership Group.

NLBC's chair, Tim Jackson has been in communication with Helen Wooley and has stressed the desire that NLBC become a principle delivery agent for the group's objectives. Helen stressed that it was the intention of the SLG to be collaborative and work with others to deliver for the industry as a whole.

NLBC has places on each of the 3 working groups established by the Leadership group and volunteers to fill those places and represent the sector will as always be welcome.

## **4.3 Technical qualifications**

In partnership with City & Guilds, a new suite of Technical Qualifications has been developed and 8,000 students are currently enrolled for these qualifications and the certificates for successful candidates will carry both the C&G and NLBC logo.

The new Technical Qualifications are designed to match government requirements for primary qualifications within study programmes whilst being very closely aligned to specific occupational needs. Whilst they are more challenging for learners, they are proving popular and will not only provide them with a good preparation for study at higher levels or direct entry to employment, but will assist providers in preparing for the regime associated with T-levels.

NLBC aims to serve Land Based industry CPD learning needs through high quality flexible, and therefore easily accessible Blended Learning. Consequently, it is important we supply the right learning/study program products, that there's a market for them and that we engage people within their Land based occupations in these. NLBC's involvement with the FLF project has not only provided access to high quality materials but has provided a valuable source of income.

## **5.0 Finance and Funding**

For many Landex members, balancing the 2019-20 budget will be challenging. The fact that most members are mixed economy, embracing a mix of further and higher education and commercial activity does provide flexibility, but the additional complexity means that high quality leadership, management and governance is essential.

There has been no increase for inflation when setting 16-18, adult education and apprenticeship rates, despite increase in the Consumer Price Index. For further education members, the recent announcement by the DfE that it will fully-fund the rise in teachers' pension contributions for colleges has provided some relief: however that does not extend to Universities.

### **5.1 16-18 Funding**

The number of 16-to-18-year-olds in England reaches a low point this year and this contributes to falling numbers both in education and in colleges. The ESFA's lagged funding methodology generates next year's funding allocations on the basis of the numbers generated this year. If numbers have fallen the allocation decreases and vice-versa.

Despite the demographic changes and in particular falling numbers of 16-18 year olds for at least one more year in most areas, the recruitment in this age group by Landex members has been mixed. For most, 16-18 numbers have continued to fall in 2018/19, but others by innovative marketing and strong performance have continued to grow. This amply demonstrated by the analysis below of provisional 16-18 funding allocations for Landex members.

The decrease in student numbers and the reduced total allocation to the sector is marked, as is the apparent shift away from programmes with primary qualifications that attract the higher weighting factors. Although this does not in all cases reflect a shift in recruitment away from land based courses, that is the case with a significant number of members. 9 members achieved an increase in provider weighting factor and in 8 cases this reflected an increase in the proportion of land based students.

It is also significant that against this backcloth 9 members still experienced significant growth and for 6 of those it was reflected by an increase in funding allocation.

For both categories of provider, the largest reduction in both student numbers and funding was in colleges currently subject to merger and/or merger discussions.

Other aspects of 16-18 funding such as bursaries, care standards and high needs funding are less easy to analyse.

Although most Landex members are mixed economy and receive adult allocations, higher education fee income, residential and other commercial income, these allocations are the most significant for many and reflect the current financial pressures faced by most Landex members.

**ESFA Provisional 16-18 Programme Funding Allocations 2019/20**  
Landex members in England\*

|  | Independent LBC's                | GFEs with Specialist LB           | All members                      |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>STUDENT NUMBERS</b>                     |                                  |                                   |                                  |
| Total Student number change 2017 -> 2018   | -696 (-3.3%)                     | -949 (-1.8%)                      | -1644 (-2.2%)                    |
| Providers with increased student numbers   | 5                                | 4                                 | 9                                |
| Providers with decreased student numbers   | 9                                | 13                                | 22                               |
| Largest increase in student numbers        | +75 (+5.7%)                      | + 226 (+4.9%)                     |                                  |
| Largest decrease in student numbers        | -200 (-10.6%)                    | - 213 (-10%)                      |                                  |
| <b>FUNDING ALLOCATION</b>                  |                                  |                                   |                                  |
| Total Funding allocation change 2018->2019 | -£5.336 million (-3.3%)          | - £6.467million (-2.5%)           | -£11.803 million (-3.1%)         |
| Providers with increased allocation        | 4                                | 2                                 | 6                                |
| Providers with decreased allocation        | 10                               | 15                                | 25                               |
| Largest increase in funding                | +£465 thousand (+6%)             | +£858 thousand (+3.9%)            |                                  |
| Largest decrease in funding                | -£1.276million (-12.2%)          | -£632 thousand (-11.1%)           |                                  |
| <b>PROVIDER WEIGHTING FACTOR</b>           |                                  |                                   |                                  |
| Average PWF change 2017->2018              | -0.0058 (-£23/full-time student) | -0.0001 (-40p./full-time student) | -0.0048 (-£19/full-time student) |
| Providers with an increased PWF            | 3                                | 6                                 | 9                                |
| Providers with a decreased PWF             | 11                               | 11                                | 22                               |
| Largest increase in PWF                    | +0.033 (+£132/full-time student) | +0.031 (+£124/student)            |                                  |
| Largest decrease in PWF                    | -0.035(-£140/student)            | -0.015 (-£60/student)             |                                  |

\* excludes NTU and Hadlow College

## 5.2 Adult Education Budget (AEB)

The ESFA has now published the AEB funding rules for 2019/20. The document provides information about the devolution of the AEB to the new combined authorities from 1st August 2019, and how provision for those living outside these areas will be funded. It also provides details of eligibility for funding for students aged 19+ resident in England who are not British citizens.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/785725/AEB\\_2019-20\\_rules\\_13\\_March\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/785725/AEB_2019-20_rules_13_March_final.pdf)

### **5.3 Chancellor's Spring Statement**

Items of particular significance to post-16 education included updates to apprenticeship reforms meaning that the co-investment rate paid by employers is cut from 10% to 5%. Also levy-paying employers are able to share more levy funds across their supply chains, with the maximum amount rising from 10% to 25%.

Following the Chancellor's announcements on changes in levy funding transfers (see above) and small business contributions to apprenticeship costs, the DfE has published an update on apprenticeship funding in England.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/788312/Apprenticeship\\_funding\\_in\\_England\\_from\\_April\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788312/Apprenticeship_funding_in_England_from_April_2019.pdf)

## **6.0 Department for Education (DfE)**

Regular changes in personnel and 'silo' structures make it very difficult to help inform departmental thinking. However, representation at a wide range of consultation meetings together with individual and group meetings have taken place throughout the year.

### **6.1 Post-16 Strategy**

Discussion with the head of post-16 strategy at the DfE has offered the opportunity to provide briefings on:

- Devolution issues, including the challenges and inconsistencies encountered when working with multiple authorities on 'high needs', 'adult education' and 'capital funding'.
- Stem status for Land Based disciplines.
- Agrifood industries and the knowledge and skills agenda.

### **6.2 16 to 19 Bursary Fund – Discretionary Bursaries**

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help students overcome specific financial barriers to participation so they can remain in education. There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- bursaries for defined vulnerable groups of up to £1,200 a year
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

Landex hosted a very productive consultation meeting with DfE funding staff on to the 'review of discretionary bursaries', which led to a request for further detail on the extent to which it has proved necessary for Landex members to subsidise home to college transport. We are grateful to members for providing the necessary detail in a very short timescale.

A further opportunity to discuss this issue will be provided through a conference session and the consultation that closes on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.

### **6.3 Land Based Residential Bursaries**

As in previous years, the ESFA has raised issues with Landex about the under use of residential bursaries. It is extremely important that members either use their allocations in full or notify the Landex office as soon as possible of potential underspends so that we can discuss with the agency in-year use of these funds by other providers.

### **6.4 Further Education Condition Data Collection programme**

FE members will be aware that they were requested to provide information on their college estates for the Further Education Condition Data Collection (FE CDC) programme; They have now been notified that a surveying organisation will visit their college within the next 9 months.

The department is gathering data about the condition of FE college buildings to provide an evidence base to support future decision-making about FE capital funding. It will also provide FE colleges with useful condition data to complement their own locally commissioned surveys.

The surveying organisations to visit every FE college that receives government funding in England. Four surveying organisations have been commissioned to carry out the works and will do so through two site visits. It is important that all members participate fully in these surveys and highlight the specialist land based resources, their justification and uses. Landex will be issuing some supporting guidance before the summer break.

### **6.5 T-Level Qualifications**

Landex member have been represented on both the T-level Implementation and T-level stakeholder panels.

The £50million made available in 2018/19 to allow providers to prepare for the introduction of T-levels resulted in significant funding being available to most Landex members, specifically to prepare for the introduction of industry placements. The guidance was sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of most land based programmes and the pilot's target of successfully offering, in the first year, placements to only 10% of those eligible and funded, was warmly welcomed. During 2019/20 similar funding will be available, but with the requirement that 20% will complete a placement.

The first T-levels will be offered from 2020/21, and 4 Landex members are involved. Selection is now taking place for providers to be involved in 2021/22. It is anticipated that a total of 50-75 providers will be involved and the volume of learners will be determined once selection of the providers is complete. The 'Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care' route is due for commencement from 2022/23. Ministers are currently considering increased flexibility in the delivery of industry placements, particularly for LDD students.

Capital funding for the first tranche of providers is in two forms:

- For buildings etc, funds are subject to a bidding process, with selection based upon the quality of the case (and bid). Members are encouraged to be preparing high quality bids well in advance. The outcomes from the condition surveys may be relevant in this respect.
- For capital equipment the allocation is formula based.

Subject to the availability of funding a similar approach is expected for future programme starts.

The Education and Training Foundation has developed a high-quality T-Level Professional Development Offer to support teachers, trainers and leaders in the delivery of T-Levels from 2020 and beyond. The aim of the offer is to ensure that further education and post-16 providers are T-Level ready. This

means ensuring that teachers and trainers have the teaching skills, subject knowledge and confidence needed to deliver a high-quality T-Level programme from the outset.

The Association of Colleges (North region), The Skills and Education Group (Central region) and Creative Education (South region) are working in partnership with the Education and Training Foundation to deliver part of this exciting offer through developing regional Knowledge Hubs. These Hubs will provide an opportunity for 2020, 2021 and future T Level providers to participate in sector led, collaborative action research projects, known as Teacher Regional Improvement Projects (TRIPs). TRIPs aim to transform teaching practice in preparation for T-Levels and ultimately ensure that learners undertaking T Levels develop the knowledge, skills, behaviours and competencies required. Grants of £45,000 will be awarded to 50 collaborative TRIPs across England. Landex is directly involved with the regional Knowledge Hub in the North and will support the national dissemination of research and effective practice.

## **6.6 Apprenticeships**

A major concern for many Landex members is still the exceedingly slow development and approval of land based apprenticeship standards and their associated assessment plans.

The change in approach by the Institute for apprenticeships (IfA) in allowing the inclusion of formal qualifications within the standards is viewed by most members as a positive step by helping to ensure that sufficient underpinning knowledge will be included to allow progression to further study, but for many standards this change will not be implemented until formal review takes place.

The Agriskills Apprenticeship Group now has final approval for Packhouse Line Leader (level 3) as well as Stockperson (level 2) and Crop Technician (level 3). However there is still concern that these standards do not cater for the majority of agriculture apprentices who require a broader based apprenticeship. It has been proposed that the level 2 Stockperson standard is replaced by a general Farm Worker standard at level 2 and Stock Technician standard is developed at level 3.

## **6.7 Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF)**

The DfE has announced that a further £18 million is to be shared between the 13 colleges that submitted successful applications for support from the second round of the SCIF. The SCIF was launched in June 2018 and the total amount of funding available is £15 million. So far, 63 colleges across England have been allocated funding from the SCIF to enable them to work with a high-performing partnering college and to draw on their knowledge and expertise to help them tackle issues such as raising the standard of teaching or improving the level learner attendance and retention. The list included Landex members, Abingdon & Witney College, Chichester College Group and Craven College as lead partner colleges.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-college-improvement-fund-successful-applicants>

## **6.8 Qualification Achievement Rates (QAR)**

The 16-18 performance data for 2017/18 was published by the ESFA on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Landex is currently completing a summary of the data, together with land based sector averages which will be published shortly on the Landex website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ilr-specification-validation-rules-and-appendices-2018-to-2019>

## 6.9 Qualifications Review

This review will take place in two stages. The first stage has been published and responses are due by 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The initial consultation seeks to gather views and evidence about the general principles that should apply to post-16 qualifications, recognising that a 'one size fits all' approach will not work, particularly in relation to adults and students with additional needs including special educational needs and disabilities. The DfE wishes to explore these issues as part of the consultation, including the role of qualifications in helping the students to progress to positive destinations. A list of the questions contained in this first stage consultation seek views on the underlying principles and their application (the process). It will look at the 'rationale for deciding which qualification should be available in specific areas to meet the needs of a diverse range of people'. It will explore how 'progression' should be defined, and whether (and how) the criteria for approval should be 'tightened'. It will also include specific questions about the continuation of 'legacy' qualifications. The second consultation will build on the responses from the first stage and set out our more detailed proposals for change, including the criteria for removing approval for funding and any supporting regulatory change. This will take place in late 2019

As this topic is potentially very important to members, it will be a topic for discussion by the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee and Landex will circulate a draft response for comment and use by members where appropriate.

## 7.0 Ofsted

Consultation on the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) concluded on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019. We await confirmation of the final version of the EIF that will be used from September 2019.

The new framework is based on a solid evidence base relating to educational effectiveness and valid inspection practice. Ofsted report that they have removed any measures that do not genuinely assess quality of education and training. This will be a change from the current Common Inspection Framework (CIF) which 'can divert providers from the real substance of education; what students learn is too often coming second to the achievement of good provider performance data'. Ofsted's research has also shown that this focus on data leads to unnecessary workload for staff, teaching to the test and narrowing of curriculum. The proposed framework therefore puts the curriculum at the heart, bringing the focus of inspection back to the substance of education. There will be no separate 'teaching, learning and assessment' and 'outcomes'. Instead, these are considered as part of a broader view on the quality of education students receive, reducing the focus on data and places more focus on the substance of education. In addition to the Quality of Education judgement it is proposed that key judgements will also be made for 'Personal Development', 'Leadership and Management', 'Behaviour and Attitudes' and Overall effectiveness.

As is often the focus of good quality land based education, the planned curriculum (intent) must do more than give young people a qualification and develop personal and social skills. There needs to be clear lines of sight to jobs or meaningful progression with evidence of industry/employer engagement in planning and delivery. Ofsted, within the Quality of Education judgement will also focus on the implementation of the planned curriculum and the impact it has on the learner, their knowledge and skills development and their progression.

Ofsted plans to keep the four-point grading scale (outstanding; good; requires improvement; inadequate) and the inspection of good providers (currently called 'shorts') will continue to start from the assumption that the provider remains good.

Many Landex members responded to the consultation. Landex also provided a response with key points relating to the emphasis now on the 'professional judgement' of inspectors and how this could increase the level of challenge and appeals from organisations if there is not a sound evidence base. With the excellent work that the majority of members do with learners who have additional needs or SEND we felt a separate judgement on this would be beneficial to reflect the uniqueness of this provision and the challenges associated with measuring progress and positive destinations.

## **8.0 Post-18 Funding Review**

There were good reasons for looking broadly at post-18 education funding. Demand will rise steadily as the numbers of 18-year olds in the population will increase by nearly 23% by 2030 from its low point in 2019.

Whilst the review, led by Philip Augar, appears to have focussed primarily on funding at Level 4 and above, as well as identifying ways that colleges can offer more higher level provision. The aim is to ensure that the post-18 education system is accessible to all and that funding arrangements don't stop potential students from accessing higher education and training. This is good news for the FE sector and those who want to study academic, technical or vocational subjects locally or alongside work, or other commitments. Publication of the review, which was due to conclude in early 2019 has now been delayed due to Brexit, and there is no guarantee that it will be implemented once published.

## **9.0 Higher Education**

### **9.1 Review of Admissions**

This review is a response to the recent dramatic rise in unconditional offers, as well as the number of year zero courses on offer. There are two main concerns, firstly the potential loss of motivation by students in the lead up to the examination and final assessment period (and some cases non-completion), and secondly a distortion in the recruitment patterns of universities and colleges by students opting for an unconditional place rather than making a more reasoned decision.

### **9.2 Higher Education Grade Inflation**

There are continuing concerns that academic standards are falling because the number of firsts and 2.1 degrees awarded is rising. It is not an easy issue to address, because universities have autonomy to decide upon their degree classifications, and external examiners and assessment boards are the guardians of standards: it is difficult to compare different subjects and institutions. The QAA guidelines on qualification and credit frameworks should provide some safeguards about consistency and comparability of standards; however, institutions use different algorithms to arrive at degree classifications (not in a particularly transparent way) so they are difficult to compare. Institutions are expected to monitor their own data on classifications of degrees awarded and guard against the possibility of grade inflation.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-and-credit-frameworks>

### **9.3 Degree apprenticeships**

A short report from the Office for Students (OfS) has been published calling for more awareness and availability of degree apprenticeships. The report records that although the numbers of degree apprentices are very low, they are expected to increase considerably, including in public sector jobs. Some key findings include:

- Degree apprenticeships benefit both school leavers from disadvantaged backgrounds and mature learners already in the workforce, potentially increasing social mobility.
- The OfS promotes degree apprenticeships through access and participation work, includes them in the scope of its targets and investment, and encourages them through its guidance and support.
- The OfS wants to build progression pathways from lower-level apprenticeships to those at degree level, to remove barriers for underrepresented groups, and to ensure value for money for all learners.

One of the main ways that degree apprenticeships will increase in popularity is if students can apply for them through UCAS. The admissions service is now 'building the technology' which will enable students to apply for places on degree apprenticeships alongside their five university choices and has confirmed that it would like to run a central application portal for all apprentices but will need more funding to be able to do so.

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/degree-apprenticeships-a-viable-alternative/>

### **10.0 Relationship with DEFRA**

Working closely with DEFRA continues to be an important objective for Landex, and participation in the Biosecurity and BovineTB groups continues.

Until significant members of the department were seconded to plan for 'no-deal Brexit', Landex met with Defra officials on a regular basis and meetings alternated between London and a member College or University, to ensure that officials were fully conversant with the range of services and resources that Landex members provide for the sector and its employers.

These regular visits to member institutions also offered the opportunity for other DEFRA and DfE staff to join the visits and observe first-hand the outstanding work undertaken. However, a planned visit to CAFRE has been postponed twice and we are now seeking to resume regular meetings in London until the way forward is clearer.

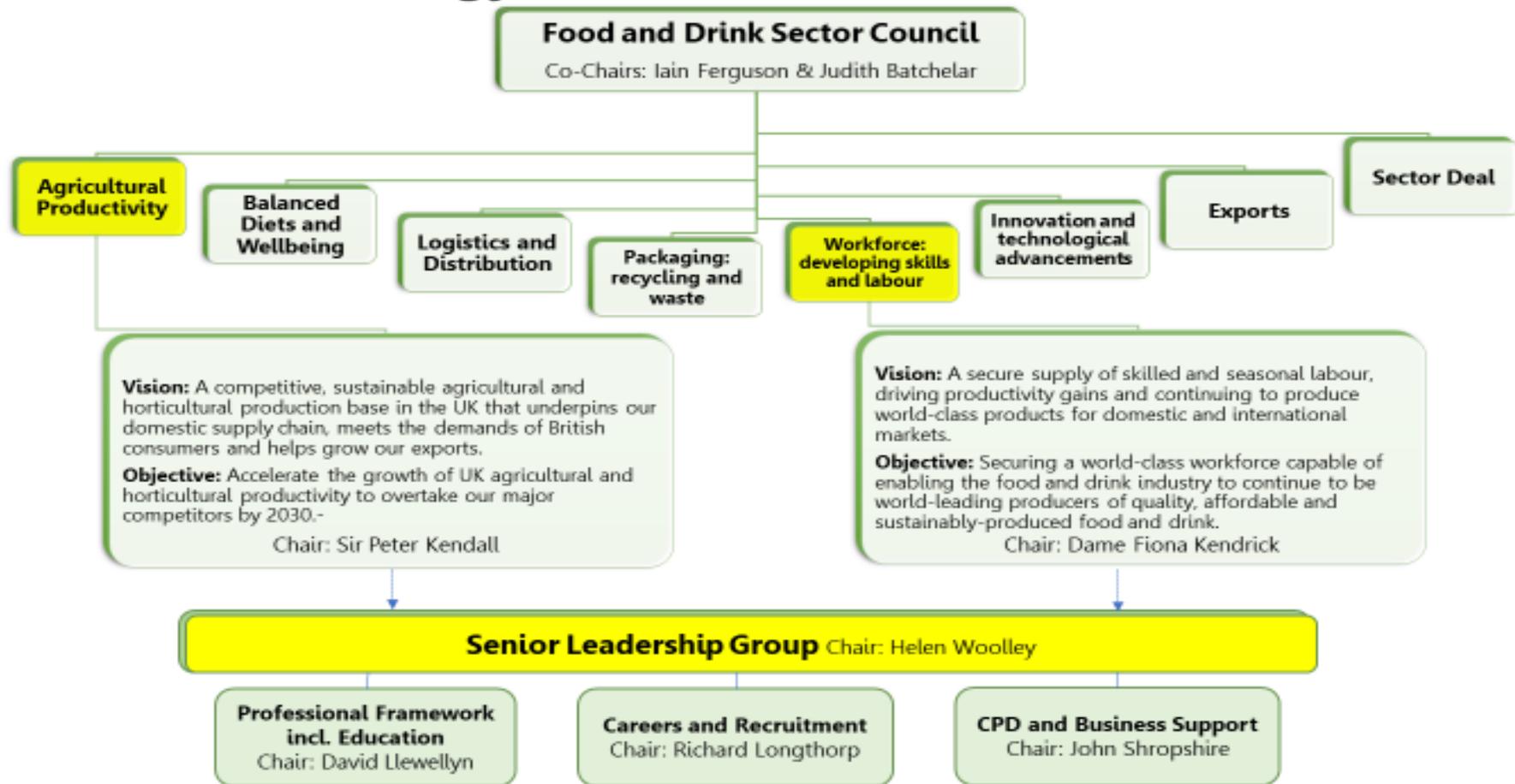
Prior to the hiatus the Landex Board had agreed to fund a secondment of someone with experience at a senior level in the education, training and skills world to help influence thinking and policy and reinforce knowledge and skills as central to the productivity agenda.

Once the Defra team members resume their original roles, this initiative will be revisited.

### **11.0 The Food and Drink Sector Council (FDSC)**

Appointed by DEFRA, this is an industry-led board and among the Council's priorities are agricultural productivity, nutrition, exports, workforce and skills, innovation, logistics and packaging.

# Industrial Strategy – Food and Drink Sector Council



The members of the Food and Drink Sector Council are senior industry individuals with wide experience from across the sector. The Council is a mechanism for the industry to engage with Government in order to increase the sector's productivity. The membership includes representatives from across the entire food chain, covering farming, manufacturing, retail, hospitality and logistics. The FDSC is jointly chaired by industry and Government: the industry Chair is appointed for a one year period.

It has been established to act as a Sector Council for the entire farm to fork food chain, covering farming, manufacturing, retail, hospitality and logistics. Its objective is to improve the productivity and sustainability of the industry. It will do this through providing a mechanism for the sector to develop industry led approaches and solutions to boosting growth and productivity across the food chain. It will also strengthen partnerships between the UK Government and the industry. Government will facilitate in removing barriers where appropriate, ensuring that relevant departments and public sector organisations are engaged.

### **11.1 Senior Leadership Group**

The Senior Leadership Group was established to take responsibility for the agricultural and production horticulture skills and development strategy. *Membership* includes senior representatives from key industry bodies and stakeholders, chaired initially by Lord Curry, it is now chaired by Helen Wooley, formerly Director General of Country Land & Business Association.

It has established 3 working groups:

- A professional framework including Education strategy (chaired by David Llewellyn)
- Careers and recruitment (chaired by Richard Longthorp)
- Continuous Professional Development and business support (chaired by John Shropshire)

Landex has places on each of the 3 working groups established by the Leadership group and volunteers to fill those places and representatives from the sector will be welcomed.

### **12.0 Ornamental Horticulture**

Pye Tait Consulting has been commissioned by the group to carry out a research project involving a survey of 1,000 businesses across the UK and follow up activity. The survey will build on an initial pilot project carried out by Pye Tait Consulting in 2018. The 2019 survey will seek the views of those working in and across the ornamental horticulture sub-sectors such as ornamental plant production; landscape design and maintenance services, arboriculture, garden retail and garden tourism which includes historic landscapes and sites, private estates and botanical gardens, among others.

It will be conducted by telephone, giving businesses the opportunity to provide their view on skills developments in the foreseeable future, their workforce needs, the impact of automation, training needs and requirements, and other topics to inform a skills strategy tailored to the sector. The telephone survey will run from late April 2019 until late June 2019. In addition, interviews and dedicated workshops for business stakeholders are planned for May and June to further inform the research.

The results from the survey will help equip the sector in making the case for lobbying government, requests for funding, informing migratory advisory committee consultations and providing insight about the demand for, and gaps within, training in the horticulture sector.

As always, the team will be pleased to discuss activity in any area of interest or concern not covered by this briefing.

Chris Moody  
**Landex**  
April 2019

