

HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE

**ANNUAL
ACCOUNTABILITY
STATEMENT
AND LOCAL
NEEDS DUTY**

JUNE 2024



HERTFORD
REGIONAL
COLLEGE

College Mission and Purpose:

Achieving sustainable economic and social impact through high quality responsive education and training, we are:

- *Partnered by employers;*
- *Defined by our communities;*
- *Enriched by our staff;*
- *Inspired by individual success.*

Ambition and Vision:

The College's ambition over the lifetime of the current five year Strategic Plan (2022 to 2027) is to become widely recognised as an **Anchor Institution** and, as a consequence, play a key, distinct and locally/regionally understood role in building successful local economies and communities. At the heart of this is the desire to support community wealth building, a people-centred approach to local economic development that succeeds in redirecting wealth back into the local economy.

Hertford Regional College believes that it has a social role, namely a social purpose, which enables the institution to develop mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships within the communities it serves and, in so doing, raising the aspirations of and improving the employment and life prospects of local people. The College must be recognised as adding **Social Value** which can be expressed generally as the quantification of the relative importance that people place on the changes they experience in their lives, in this case through interactions with the College specifically.

In addition, the College's strategic decision making must take account of a broader definition of value than just financial impacts and imperatives, where the effects on people and the environment are valued and included in how we make decisions, and where our activities can play a part in creating the changes we need for a more equitable society and sustainable planet.

Finally, this requires a change in relationships, both internally and externally, continuing the journey to move from **Transactional to Transformational** in our approach to relationship management whilst continuing to meet the needs of individuals and the wider communities we serve, including students, staff, employer partners, collaborative partners and stakeholders in general.

Strategic Objectives:

Hertford Regional College's overall strategic objectives for the five-year Strategic Plan (2022 to 2027) are grouped under six key themes plus individual associated overarching objectives, namely:

Students	"Preparing today's students to take advantage of tomorrow's opportunities."
Society	"Creating positive community impact by adding social value."
Product	"Meeting the skills needs of employers and ambitions of our students."
People	"Collaborating to deliver excellence."
Finance	"Achieving sustainability through investment."
Quality	"Moving towards demonstrable and sustainable excellence."

Background and Context:

Hertford Regional College is a medium-sized, general further education college with two campuses located in Broxbourne and Ware. Rated as “Good” by Ofsted in the most recent inspection in May 2024, and “Outstanding” in terms of financial health (ESFA 2022/23), the College provides a wide range of post-16 professional and technical education and training to meet the needs of local employers in key sectors, study programmes for 16- to 19-year-old learners including T Levels from September 2023, adult education programmes, apprenticeships, discrete provision for learners with high needs (for which it is judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted in May 2024), higher education and commercial programmes. The College has experienced significant growth in 16 to 18 learners in 2023/24.

The large majority of the College’s learners live in Broxbourne, East Herts, London Borough of Enfield, Epping Forest, and Harlow. As will be seen in the data that follows, these recruitment/travel to learn areas vary considerably in respect of deprivation, overall attainment and specific achievement at Key Stage 4.

The most recent multiple deprivation index (ONS 2019) ranks Enfield as the most deprived of the College’s catchment areas (74), followed by Harlow (124), Broxbourne (164), Epping Forest (205) and East Herts (307). Looking at education as a separate component, the picture changes with Harlow ranked as the most deprived (85), followed by Broxbourne (107), Enfield (145), Epping (151) and East Herts (295).

Looking at achievement by NVQ level and percentage of residents qualified to that level by area:

Qualifications by Area (% of Age 16-64)	NVQ4+	NVQ3+	NVQ2+	NVQ1+	Other	No qualifications
Broxbourne	26.0	41.9	69.3	74.6	#	#
East Herts	50.3	76.7	92.9	95.5	#	#
Enfield	42.4	57.7	71.6	72.2	17.7	10.1
Epping Forest	54.7	74.4	91.2	93.9	#	#
Harlow	28.7	64.5	84.6	88.0	#	#
<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>50.8</i>	<i>70.0</i>	<i>87.9</i>	<i>90.4</i>	<i>4.4</i>	<i>5.2</i>

indicates an insufficient sample size.

And Academic Attainment 8 Scores by Area

School Location	No of Schools	Average Attainment 8 Score 21/22	Average Attainment 8 Score 22/23
Broxbourne	8	48.2	46.0
East Hertfordshire	14	55.9	52.9
Enfield	25	48.6	47
Epping Forest	8	50.2	46.5
Harlow	7	41.0	40.5
<i>Hertfordshire</i>	<i>96</i>	<i>53.3</i>	<i>51.0</i>

As can be seen, Academic Attainment 8 scores declined in all the College's catchment areas in 2022/23.

In addition to the two main campuses, the College owns a profitable subsidiary company, CK Assessment and Training Ltd located in Nazeing on the border of Broxbourne and Epping Forest, which provides study programmes and apprenticeships in plumbing and gas engineering as well as professional gas training courses. The board of CK Assessment and Training Ltd has its own ambitious vision for developing the company further over the next five years to become a regional education and training hub for renewable and sustainable energy businesses, as well as meeting their ongoing traditional energy and utilities training needs, serving the long term business requirements of sector employers in Hertfordshire, Essex and North London.













Meeting Local Skills Needs:

The Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) for Hertfordshire was approved by the Secretary of State for Education in August 2023. The priority sectors identified for Hertfordshire are:

- Property and Construction
- Creative Industries
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Life Sciences
- Health and Care
- Education and Childcare
- Engineering and Manufacturing

There are also skills needs specific to niche/specialised industries or employers local to particular sub-regions with the need for Essential Skills, Digital Skills, and Green Skills underpinning all sectors.

Essential Skills have long been identified as an underpinning skills need and the following was produced following a LEP survey of Hertfordshire employers pre pandemic. Evidence obtained through the LSIP process would confirm that this is still relevant today.

Personal & people		Hertfordshire understanding
Motivation and ambition		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Actively participate ▶ Show enthusiasm ▶ Knowledge of the sector ▶ Pursue aspirations and goals
Confidence		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Willing to meet new people ▶ Able to hold conversations with peers, managers and customers ▶ Recognise own strengths and able to present these
Respect and good manners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Listen and learn ▶ Recognise the feelings of others ▶ Be polite ▶ Remain calm
Determination and resilience		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Commitment to get things done ▶ Learn from mistakes and accept criticism ▶ Resist distractions ▶ Adapt to changes
Adaptability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Flexible to cope with changing demands ▶ Able to apply knowledge to different situations
Teamwork		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cooperate with others ▶ Recognise skills in others ▶ Value contribution from others
Technical & practical skills		Hertfordshire understanding
Numeracy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Apply simple mathematical concepts ▶ Understand simple arithmetic ▶ Understand costs and expenditure
Literacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Able to express yourself in writing ▶ Understanding of business etiquette verbally and in writing ▶ Able to explain yourself verbally
Business and customer awareness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understand commercial realities ▶ Able to professionally communicate with customers ▶ Manage your time effectively
Analytical and problem-solving skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Investigate systematically ▶ Identify problems ▶ Look for better ways and suggest solutions ▶ Plan and organize tasks
Digital technology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understand the development in technology for business ▶ Basic knowledge of IT
Qualifications		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Achieve qualifications valued by employers

The College has benefited from being part of a county based LEP area that works exclusively for the communities of the county it serves whilst acknowledging surrounding geography and place, particularly London (NB The work of the LEP has been subsumed by Hertfordshire County Council in April 2024 and there will be continuity in serving the needs to the county after the LEP officially ceases to exist via the newly named Hertfordshire Futures). This brings some challenges especially when looking at specific skills needs by local area vis a vis the county of Hertfordshire as a whole. For example, Life Sciences and Gene Therapies is an identified key skills need in the county but in specific clusters, such as Stevenage which is outside of the College’s immediate catchment area where North Herts College is the key FE partner for that location. This compares to Creative Industries (plus ancillary industries and supply chain) which is currently focussed on the west of the county but is extending to the east as a consequence of multiple studio developments in north London and the opening of Sunset Studios in Broxbourne. Thus, the College has been directly partnering with West Herts College since 2021 to meet current and future needs.

Over 90% of local businesses are categorised as “micro” in 4 out of the 5 areas the College serves as can be seen from the data taken from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). SME’s are truly the focus of the College’s work.

Area:	Micro 0-9 employees		Small 10-49 employees		Medium 50-249 employees		Large 250+ employees		Total Number of Businesses
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Broxbourne	4,00	91.2	325	7.4	45	1.0	15	0.3	4,385
East Herts	7,165	90.5	615	7.8	120	1.5	20	0.3	7,920
Enfield	13,795	93.1	875	5.9	120	0.8	30	0.2	14,825
Epping Forest	7,685	91.5	605	7.2	95	1.1	20	0.2	8,405
Harlow	2,915	88.5	305	9.3	55	1.7	15	0.5	3,295

Source: ONS & IDBR June 2023

All the communities that the College serves have common current and projected future skills needs in Construction and the Built Environment, Health and Social Care, Education and Childcare, Professional Services, Business Administration and Support Services plus Retail and Commercial Enterprise. These are supported by more local needs in Creative Industries, Hospitality and Leisure Industries plus Sport and Wellbeing. Although important, Digital as a specific sector, Life Sciences and Engineering and Manufacturing are not as significant within the College’s geographic area as they are elsewhere in the county.

Developing the Annual Accountability Statement:

Strategic Drivers:

The following are considered as the current key strategic drivers for 2024/25 and are coherent with those articulated in the five-year Strategic Plan (2022 to 2027):

1 – Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)

The key findings of the initial LSIP for Hertfordshire is and continues to be a key driver for this statement. The College has an excellent working relationship with local employers and stakeholders and looks forward to continuing to deliver in respect of the future skills needs of the local communities it serves and in responding to the wider county based technical skills needs evidence contained in the LSIP.

2 – Place and Community

This statement will prioritise provision that is relevant to the communities we serve and that meet local employer needs reinforcing our standing as a place-based Anchor Institution. The College works closely with the two local authority areas in Hertfordshire in which its campuses are located, as well as employer partners and other stakeholders such as the DWP.

3 - T Levels

The College commenced delivery of the government's flagship "T Level" qualifications in September 2023 and will continue to roll out further provision in September 2024, including year two of the T Levels that commenced in September 2023. Many of our students are already benefiting from the industry placement model that forms an important part of the T Level offer.

4 –Adult Education

Adult Education (both funded and non-funded) needs to continue to be developed further to meet local community and employer needs. The key focus of the delivery of the ESFA national adult skills fund will be to support the upskilling of both existing and new communities in Hertfordshire and Essex, including communities linked directly to significant residential/commercial development and those recently arrived from Ukraine, to enable individuals to access new and better jobs. ESOL provision is projected to see continued growth in 2024/25 building on the significant growth in 2023/24.

5 – Higher Level Skills

Given the low achievement levels of specific communities we serve, further consideration needs to be given as to how place-based provision is developed and participation is increased in this space to raise aspirations and strengthen the employment opportunities of local residents.

6 – Learners with Additional Needs

Current levels of demand and continued significant future growth in said demand will drive our response to local needs. The College is committed to excellence in this area by providing outstanding education and support appropriate to the needs of individual learners in both specialist and mainstream curriculum areas.

7 – Sustainability

This will underpin all facets of our delivery and stakeholder engagement with further increased strategic significance going forward. The College aspires to having a curriculum offer with sustainability at its heart.

8 – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

We look to embrace difference and diversity of identity, experience, and thought, and actively strive for inclusive behaviours across our workforce and student body whilst demanding the same from our partners and stakeholders.

9 – Collaboration

Section that follows refers.

10 – Strategic Investment

The College will continue to prioritise investment in capital and other projects that support the enhancement of facilities for learners and/or provide commercial opportunities for the College, building on significant financial outlay to date particularly since the turn of the century.

Collaboration – Further Details:

Collaborative working is an essential part of the way Hertford Regional College has and will continue to meet local skills needs.

Local FE Colleges:

The College works collaboratively with the three other Hertfordshire based FE Colleges. This has enabled the four colleges to work together in order to support Herts Chamber of Commerce, as the nominated Employer Representative Body, to plan for the effective development and delivery of a successful and meaningful Local Skills Improvement Plan for the betterment of those that reside and work in the county.

The four colleges have worked effectively to deliver solutions relating to particular place-based priorities such that geographic characteristics or areas of technical expertise have been identified and form part of established working practice including delivery of national programmes such as the Strategic Development Fund in 2022/23 and the Local Skills Improvement Fund in 2023/24. These programmes/projects have built upon strong relationships at senior level leading to effective working between staff across all the colleges and at all levels. This has enabled us to develop a shared platform for ongoing collaborative CPD in the form of a virtual campus.

Secondary Schools:

All schools in Broxbourne and East Herts currently operate Sixth Forms, apart from Goffs Churchgate which forms part of an academy trust with Goffs School. Relations have changed for the better over the past four years, particularly in Broxbourne, with notable impact on the pattern of post Key Stage 4 recruitment and has led to significant 16 to 18 learner number growth in 2023/24 c300. We also provide technical and vocational tasters and immersive visits for year 10 and 11 school groups, bespoke provision for two Pupil Referral Units (Broxbourne and Stevenage), as well as learning opportunities for home schooled young people

Higher Education:

The four Hertfordshire FE colleges form part of the well-established University of Hertfordshire Consortium that validates the delivery of a range of Foundation Degrees, Extended Degrees at the colleges and, uniquely at Hertford Regional College, three Level 6 “top ups” that resulted in the first degrees being conferred in October 2023. These offerings complement our own HE offerings such as HNDs and professional qualifications such as AAT.

Independent Training Providers:

The College works with a very small number of Independent Training Providers, mainly our own subsidiary company, a specialist welding training organisation and established and trusted partners to deliver the Greater London Authority contract specifically.

Local Needs Duty:

The Governing Body signed off on the current 5-year Strategic Plan in July 2022 and their strategic vision of the College's role as an anchor institution focussed on building successful local economies and communities by meeting local and regional skills needs. They regularly review how Hertford Regional College is meeting these needs through the long-term strategic planning process and associated reporting in addition to their regular strategic oversight and engagement through the work of the Curriculum, Quality and Business Planning Committee, Corporation Board and at the Corporation Conference.

At the Corporation Conference in January 2024, governors discussed individual curriculum plans with Curriculum Area Managers, satisfying themselves that the established principles of curriculum planning were being met and that there were clear links to meeting the needs of the employers by co-creating curriculum that meets local and regional skills needs.

The established curriculum planning principles can be effectively summarised as follows:

- To review and revitalise the curriculum offer in each curriculum area through use of LMI, SWOT analysis and employer engagement
- To prepare curriculum area maps for each area that outline curriculum intent and progression pathways
- To complete the programme approval process for each planned course, including the rationale and unique characteristics of each course along with market analysis informed by local LMI data, evidence of employers' skills requirements and LSIP priorities.

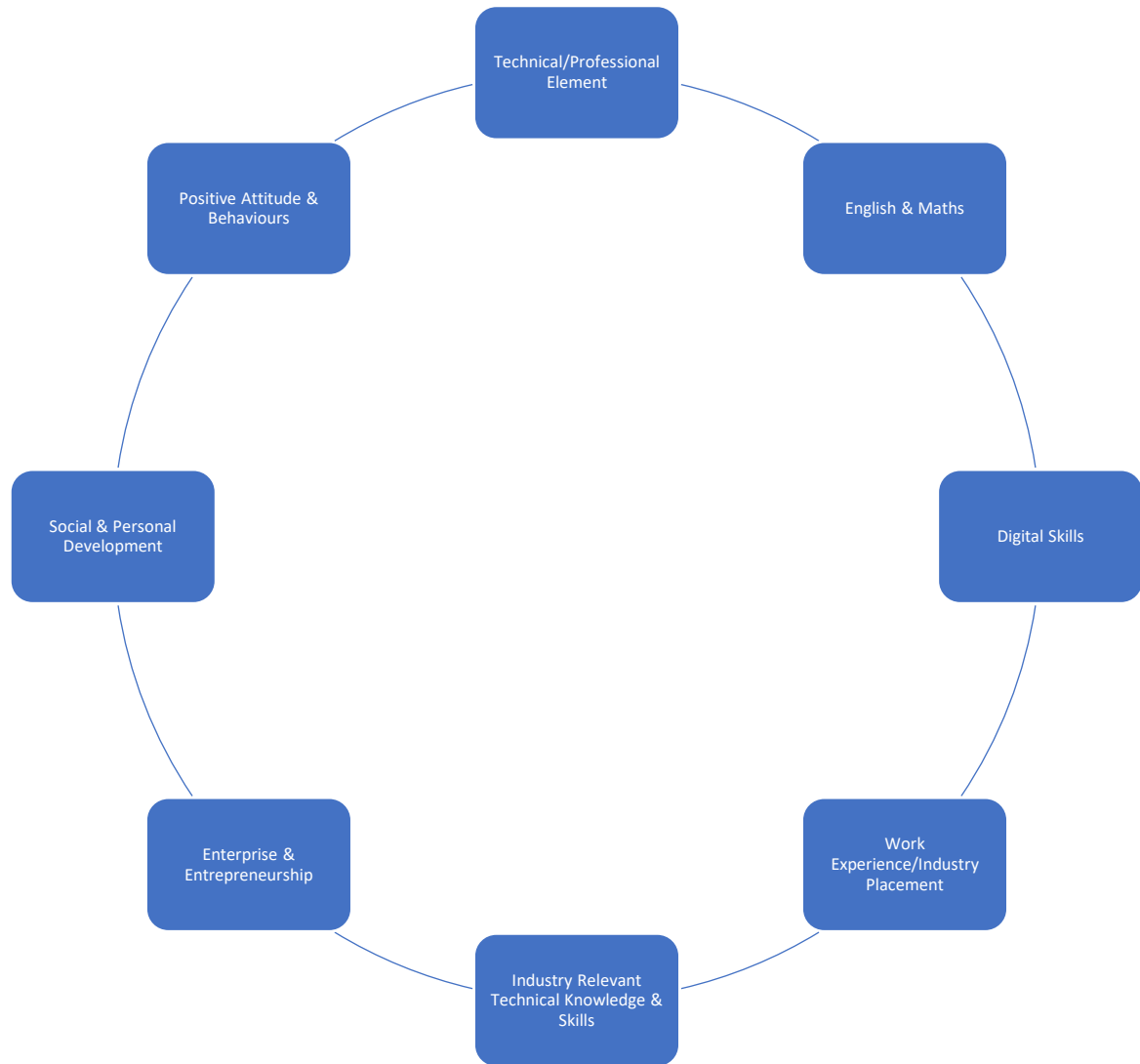
This was further supported by learning walks and conversations with staff and students.

The Corporation regularly receives updates on collaborative working with other providers through reports to Curriculum, Quality and Business Planning Committee and the Board on topics such as – relations and activities with local schools, the work of the HE Consortium with the University of Hertfordshire, joint working with the 3 other Hertfordshire FE colleges on LSIF (SDF previously) and any LSIP updates.

The Corporation is satisfied that the College's provision continues to meet local needs.

Curriculum Delivery Model:

The College has developed the Destination Curriculum Model to meet the needs of its learners and drive the requisite outcomes that benefit the communities it serves. The development of essential skills is embedded within the model.



Student Support:

Students at the College benefit from a wide range of student support services. These cover the full range of in-house services, including counselling which the College has retained unlike many providers. This is complemented by a range of external agencies and bespoke software solutions that the College invests in to provide additional support services, particularly in response to the current mental health crisis impacting on young people and adults that has been enhanced by the global pandemic.

Specialist support for individuals and groups is provided both in and outside of the classroom/workshop to an increasing number of learners and not just those with Education and Health Care Plans. In 2023/24, the College had 299 students with EHCPs (14% approx.). HRC aims to operate a whole student, whole college approach to the management and provision of support for special educational needs.

All young people are entitled to an education that enables them to make progress so that they:

- Achieve their best
- Become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and
- Make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment or higher education or training.

In addition, a tutorial programme is delivered to all learners on study programmes that is reviewed annually and amended as appropriate to ongoing and emerging needs as well as societal challenges and context.

Through the curriculum and/or the enrichment team our students have the opportunity to be active in the local community by undertaking a range of voluntary activities for the betterment of the local environment and residents.

Careers Education, Advice and Guidance:

The College employs two members of staff to deliver careers education, advice and guidance and this is enhanced by work placement co-ordinators who manage industrial and work placements as well as apprenticeship trials and internships. This is also delivered through the annually reviewed tutorial programme and enhanced by careers fairs, employer visits (inward and outbound), higher education fairs and visits and skills competitions. It has achieved cross-College Matrix Accreditation and in our most recent Compass assessment we were compliant in all 8 of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Review of Actions – 2023/24:

The College successfully introduced two of the three planned T Levels in September 2023 – Construction (Design, Surveying and Planning) and Digital (Production, Design and Development). The third, Education and Childcare, did not run due to low numbers. Elements on sustainability were delivered in all full-time study programmes and the Skills Builder framework was further embedded. ESOL provision grew significantly with multiple new programmes delivered in 2023/24. A new Level 4 course in Advanced Techniques and Management Practice in Hairdressing was successfully introduced in September 2023. Adult provision has grown, specifically direct delivery and further reducing the dependency on subcontractors. There were 10 supported internships in 2023/24. Apprenticeship growth has met projected targets with new standards introduced in Hairdressing and Property Maintenance.

Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities 2024/25:

Specifically, for the purpose of this document and in response to the skills needs highlighted in the Local Skills Improvement Plan:

Aims and Objectives	Impact and/or Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Priorities for Learning and Skills
<p><i>1 - To introduce 5 new T Levels from September 2024 in:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Education and Childcare,</i> ➤ <i>Business (Management administration),</i> ➤ <i>Electrical (Building services for construction),</i> ➤ <i>Engineering (Maintenance, installation and repair)</i> ➤ <i>Science.</i> <p><i>benefitting up to 67 learners</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to develop and roll out key government priority curriculum that meets national, regional and local needs, as identified in both the College's Strategic Plan and the Local Skills Improvement Plan, thus meeting specific sectoral needs as identified by employers.</i></p>
<p><i>2 - To launch the CSCS centre to local and regional candidates as well as utilising it to support the delivery of Sector Based Work Academies in Construction</i></p> <p><i>CSCS tests – 100 candidates</i></p> <p><i>SBWA Construction – 24 candidates</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to develop a curriculum and offering that meets specific regional and local needs, as defined by the agencies, employers and communities the College serves, befitting its role as a place-based anchor institution and improving the economic prospects of local people.</i></p>
<p><i>3 - To formally launch a Green Skills/Retrofit offer to local and regional employers and potential workforce entrants benefitting 25 learners and 25 employers.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to develop a construction and ancillary trades offer that meets specific identified employer needs in the communities the College serves.</i></p> <p><i>This offer enhances existing programmes to provide significant opportunities in key local and regional skills shortage areas, such as Green Skills, and meets specific targets as identified by Herts LEP/HCC in their skills forecasting and plans as well as the LSIP.</i></p>
<p><i>4 - Further develop the use of Skillsbuilder in 2024/25 to support delivery of an employability skills qualification as part of our qualification</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to develop the College's curriculum model in the delivery of employability skills so that it meets specific regional and local needs,</i></p>

<p><i>bearing ESOL offer to enhance the progression opportunities for these learners to further study and the workplace, benefitting 100 learners.</i></p>	<p><i>as identified in both the College’s Strategic Plan and as a key priority in the Local Skills Improvement Plan, and are valued by employers in the communities the College serves.</i></p>
<p><i>5 - To continue to grow ESOL provision to meet the needs of existing and recently arrived communities (especially those from Ukraine) to enable adults to access education and training opportunities in higher level language and technical skills and well as the workplace</i></p> <p><i>Planned growth in 2024/25 is a further 59 learners (21%), benefitting a total of 340 learners overall.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to develop the curriculum so that it meets specific regional and local needs defined by the communities the College serves, as befits its role as a place-based anchor institution, as well as in the workplace with the support of external agencies.</i></p>
<p><i>6 – To introduce a number of additional programmes for 2024/25 to meet local demand including: a broader Level 1 offer in Hair and Beauty; Level 3 Beauty for adults; Level 3 Fashion/Business/Retail benefitting up to 45 learners</i></p> <p><i>Introduce a broader commercial and community offer in both Hair and Beauty plus Art and Design</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to further enhance existing provision and introduce new provision in 2024/25 based on learner feedback and local employment opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>Continue to further enhance existing provision and introduce new provision in 2024/25 to support local employment opportunities as well as community health and wellbeing.</i></p>

Corporation statement:

On behalf of the Corporation of Hertford Regional College, it is hereby confirmed that the Corporation conducts reviews in line with the local needs duty, and as such results in the plan. The Annual Accountability Agreement statement sets out an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation at their meeting on 24th April 2024.



Chair of Governors



Principal/Chief Executive and Accounting Officer

Date – 24th April 2024

Supporting documentation:

Hertfordshire LSIP

<https://www.hertschamber.com/lcip>

College Strategic Plan 2022/2027

https://www.hrc.ac.uk/images/FINAL_HRC_Strategic_Plan_2022_to_2027_NEW.pdf

College Inspection Report May 2024

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50251188>

College Financial Statements 2022/2023

https://www.hrc.ac.uk/images/Consolidated_Report_and_Financial_Statements_2023_-_FINAL_-_SIGNED_002.pdf