



Annual Accountability Statement (Part 2)

2024 - 2025



This plan will be published on City of Wolverhampton College website and can be accessed from the following link <https://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/our-college/college-documents-policies/>

Publication Date: June 2024

Version No. 1

1. College Purpose

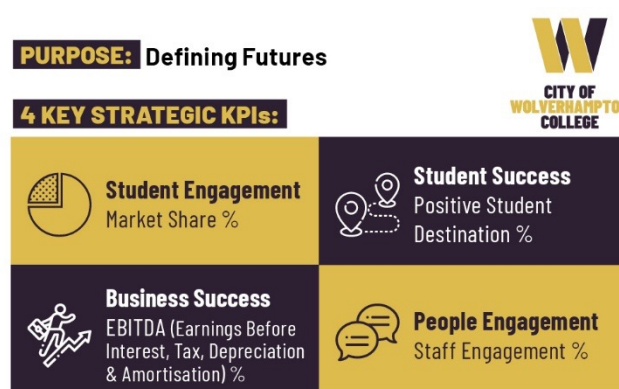
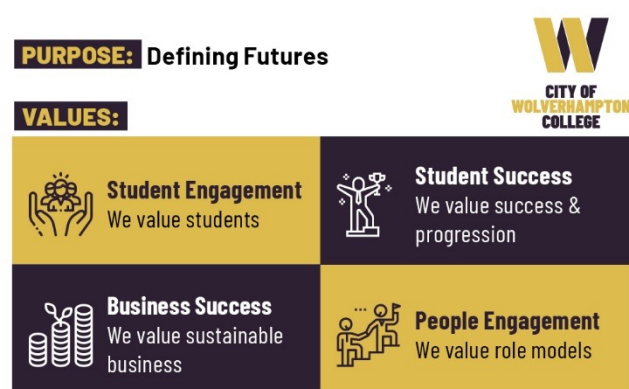
City of Wolverhampton College's purpose is 'Defining Futures'.

Situated in the city of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands the College predominantly serves the communities of Wolverhampton and surrounding areas including Dudley, Walsall, Staffordshire and Shropshire. The city forms part of the 'Black Country' that covers most of the four Metropolitan Boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

The College was formed in September 1999 as a result of a merger between Wulfrun College and Bilston Community College. It was initially known as Wolverhampton College, however adopted its current title after Wolverhampton gained city status in December 2000.

The College develops and delivers knowledge, skills and behaviours in collaboration with local and national employers, which contributes to positive destinations and improves life chances.

To ensure the purpose is deliverable, there is a strategic framework that is formed of the four areas: Student Engagement, Student Success, Business Success and People Engagement. This strategic framework is further underpinned by a set of key values aligned to each success area.



The College recognises the high levels of unemployment in Wolverhampton, and the development of essential employment skills that are needed to gain, and sustain employment is a focus for young people across their education programmes.

The College also plays a major role in the regeneration of the city and meeting the recruitment needs of employers by offering

adult training that gives Wolverhampton and West Midlands residents the skills they need to gain, and importantly keep, employment in many priority sectors. In a city with an ethnically diverse population it is also essential to our communities and economic regeneration that provision is developed with the skills required both academically and vocationally.

¹ Around 7,700 people aged 16 and over in Wolverhampton were unemployed in the year ending Sept 2023. This is a rate of 6.2%. The unemployment rate for Wolverhampton was higher than across the West Midlands as a whole [ONS](#)

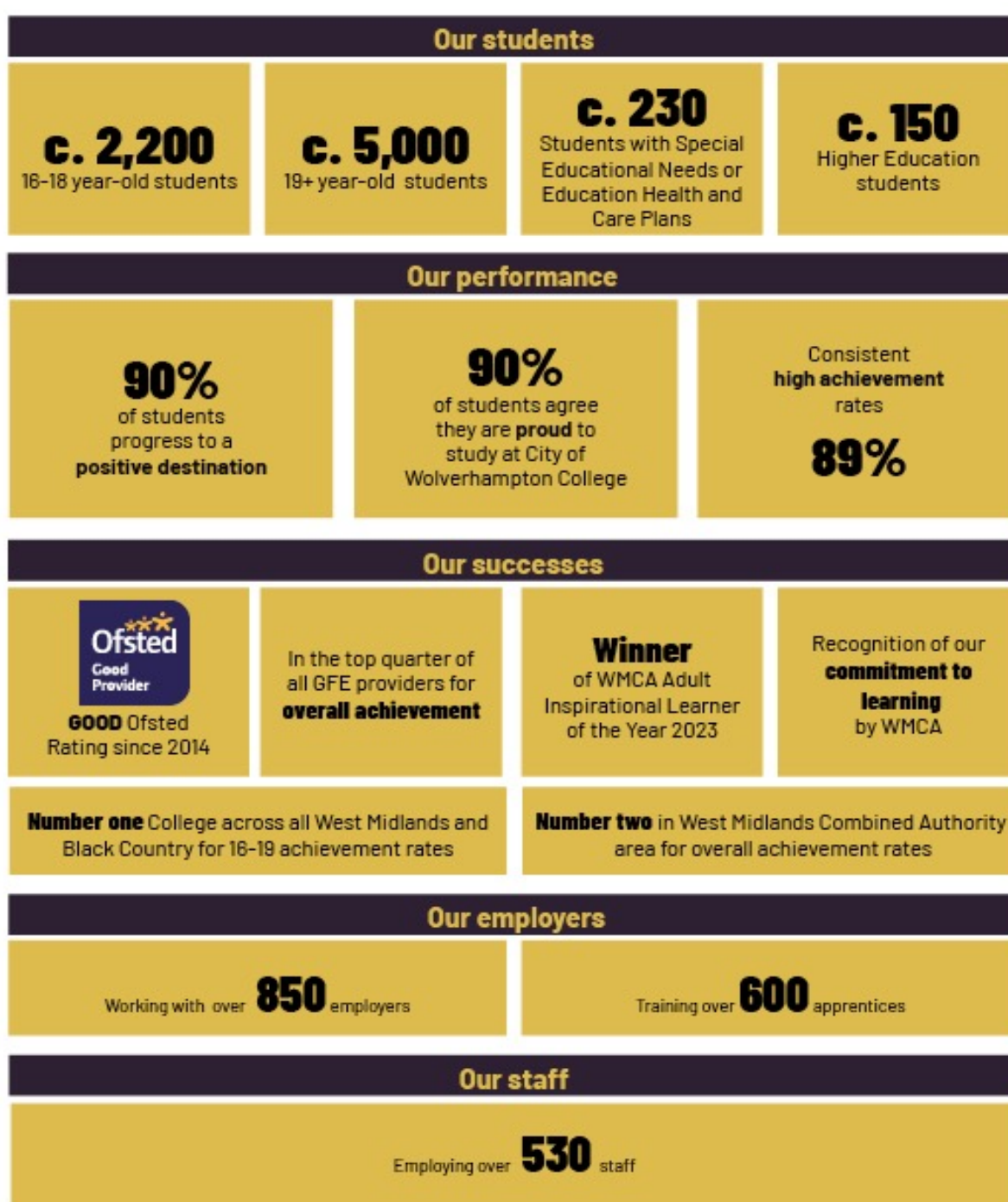
² 45% of residents being Ethnic Minority, furthermore, 23% were not born in the UK (2021) [WVInsight](#)

2. Context and Place

The College was formed in September 1999 as a result of a merger between Wulfrun College and Bilston Community College. It was initially

known as Wolverhampton College, however adopted its current title after Wolverhampton gained city status in December 2000.

Our Key Strengths



These statistics are based on 22/23 outcomes.

College Curriculum Offer

City of Wolverhampton College offers education provision for young people including A Levels, adult learning, apprenticeships and programmes for learners who have High Needs.

The overall curriculum offer is ambitious and responses to national Local Skills Improvement Plan and National Skills Priorities covering most sectors that support the wider economy and quality of life in the region.

Courses and qualifications for young people range from entry level and foundation learning to Level 3 in areas covering construction trades, business, computing, automotive, engineering, health and social care, early years, sport, hair, beauty, uniform public services, hospitality and catering including bakery, science and various creative industries. Since September 2024, the College has pro-actively engaged with T Level delivery and offer provision across onsite construction and digital support, with a future offer in areas such as healthcare science, health, engineering, electrical, early years and education and construction management.

Adults provision includes academic and also vocational ESOL, access to HE pathways and university-level courses and foundation degrees. The College is adding Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) to the offer in subject areas of construction, digital, leadership and management and manufacturing or mechanical engineering and will be looking to further widen the range to include HN Flex routes. Our offer also includes a range of Free Courses for Jobs, retraining or employment initiatives such as Sector Based Work Academy (SWAP) and Into Employment Programmes are provided for residents to gain skills and, importantly, enter/keep employment in many of the priority sectors. The College has directly addressed most of the priority challenges through its offer and innovative partnership working, for example:

- ➔ Digital Bootcamps are delivered in partnership with BlackRook Academy, a brand new training company launched by a long-established city based media

consultancy, focussing on social media training to enhance students' employment credentials. Students gain relevant and deep knowledge of social strategy, research and content from industry skills experts and guaranteed a job interview at the end of the course.

- ➔ A Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Academy (TRIA) has been created with the purpose of increasing employment opportunities for local people and meet the demand for skilled operatives to work in construction and maintenance of train lines, tram routes and stations across the region. The TRIA has been developed in partnership with National Infrastructure Solutions (NIS), a leading provider of training in the rail, civil engineering and utilities industries and provides training for newcomers to the sector, as well as existing rail operatives who want to upskill and develop their industry knowledge further.
- ➔ An Electric Vehicle and Green Technologies Training Centre is delivering training to technicians to work on electric and hybrid vehicles and equip local residents with knowledge, skills and qualifications. The scheme sees the delivery of programmes from beginner to advanced level, suitable for those new to the automotive retail and repair sector, as well as those currently working in the industry who need to retrain.

The College apprenticeship offer covers many industry sectors offering standards in automotive, business and management, business improvement, various construction trades, engineering including drinks dispensing and polymer processing, hairdressing and barbering.



Our Students

The College's market share of 16-19 students (who predominately study full-time programmes, known as Education Programmes for Young People) within the Black Country is

currently 7% - which has grown. School Sixth Forms hold 33% of the market, with the biggest competitor being other Colleges, with 49% of the market.

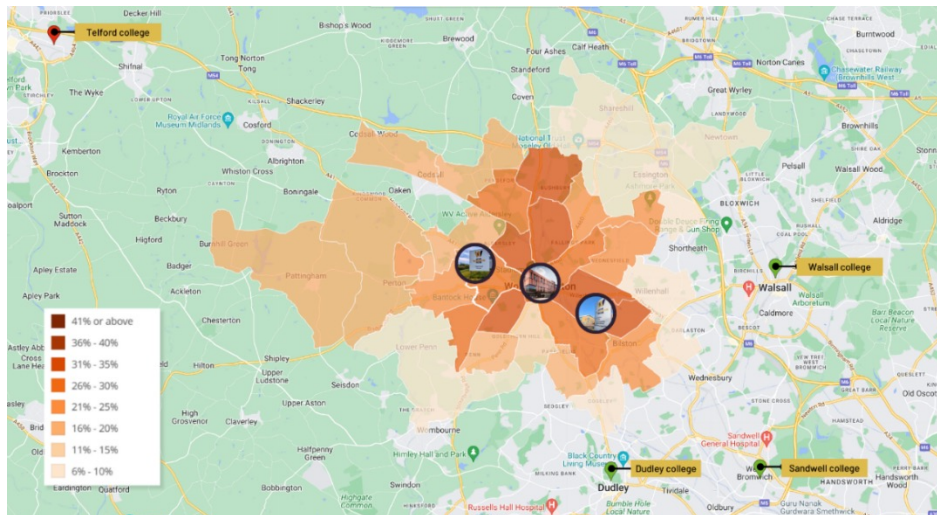


Figure 1 - Analysis of 16-19 recruitment by location.

The College's market share of adults within the Black Country is 13%, which makes the College the largest provider for adults in the region. Other Colleges have 46% of the market and Private Training Providers have 30%. Adult learning covers the College's part-time offer.

The College's market share within Wolverhampton is currently at 33%. The College has the stronghold of the market with Private Training Providers holding 30% and then the Local Authority and Colleges at 18%.

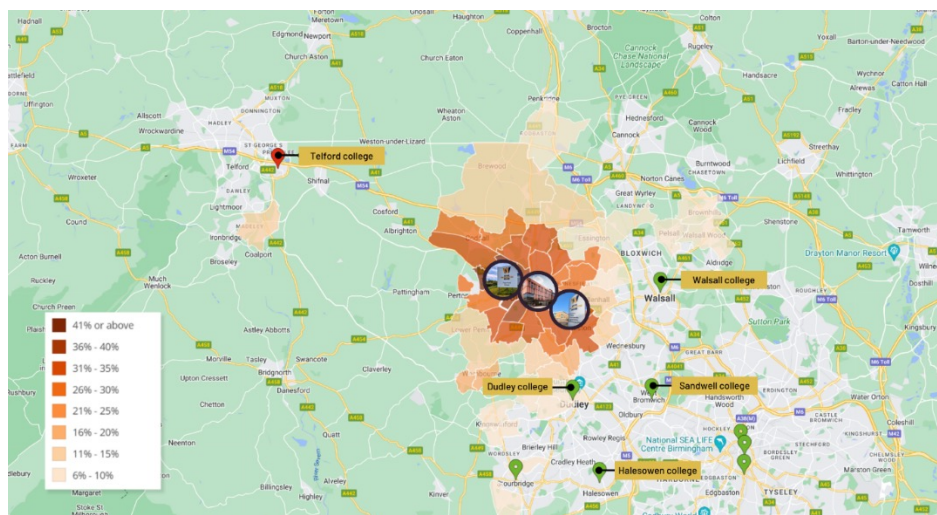


Figure 2 - Analysis of Adult recruitment by location

College Estates

The College has two main campuses in the city – Paget Road and Wellington Road approximately four miles apart, as well as a stand-alone Electric Vehicle and Green Technologies Training Centre in Wednesfield, and a commercial Polymer Training and Innovation Centre in Telford.

The Paget Road campus has its own sixth form centre for A Levels and creative arts facilities. The Wellington Road campus has an extended Construction Innovation Centre, a professional

bakery kitchen, a sports centre and hairdressing & barbering salon, as well as an autism base. This campus also has a dedicated outdoor training areas for groundworks and rail.

Due to open for the 2024/25 academic year, an Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre (ATAC) has been designed for engineering and automotive, moving the subject areas out of the Paget Road campus. This project marks phase one of the City Learning Quarter.

Future Vision

The City Learning Quarter (CLQ) project was initialised in October 2016 in order to realise the vision to provide first class further education facilities in the best possible location. The CLQ campus have been supported by an initial £6.2 million investment from the City of Wolverhampton Council and Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, which has enabled the completion of design work, site surveys, ground investigations, site acquisition and clearance. The Council has also secured £20 million from the Government's Levelling

Up Fund and £5 million from the Towns Fund to help deliver the City Learning Quarter vision, which is set to be complete in the academic year 2025/26.

The new city centre campus forms part of the College's ambitious plans to transform the student environment. The campus will offer first-class facilities for residents of Wolverhampton and beyond. This will support the exit and divestment of the Paget Road campus, envisaged by 2024/25.

City of Wolverhampton context

Wolverhampton is a city with a population of over 260,000 residents. The population is projected to further rise to 296,102 by 2043. The 15-19 cohort will grow by over 20% by 2025 (from 2021) and keeps increasing until it exceeds 30% in 2030.

The city covers a total area of 26.81 square miles with twenty Wards. The city is ethnically diverse with 45% of residents in 2021 being Ethnic Minority. A fifth of residents are disabled.

The city has seen increasing levels of deprivation in recent years and has one of the highest unemployment rates in England, and employment rates are lower than England as a whole.

Just over half of residents (54.1%) are qualified

at Level 3 or above, compared with 60% nationally. As a result, employers in the city often face skills shortages, with hard to fill vacancies, particularly in roles that require advanced or higher skills.

The city is one of the UK's top ten areas for economic growth and has £4.4bn of private and public sector investment on site or planned. Wolverhampton's Historic industrial strength influences the city's landscape and employer breakdown to this day and reinforcing this, the manufacturing cluster remains a priority. The local economy still has a larger manufacturing sector than most cities in the UK and relies upon jobs in the public and health sector.

The Black Country context

The Black Country area review covers the 4 local authority areas of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Council and Wolverhampton City Council, with a total population of over 1.2m residents (2022). The Black Country has a diverse population as 31.4% of residents are ethnic minorities, above the national proportion of 19.0% (2021).

Despite progress in recent years, stark challenges remain in the Black Country, exacerbated by the pandemic. Poor educational achievement is one of the strongest predictors of low healthy life expectancy, and a bad educational start in life fuels a trajectory of reduced educational attainment and weaker prospects. Approximately 40% of Black Country pupils do not achieve a good level of development at the end of reception.

Therefore, a skills challenge remains throughout the Black Country. Overall, 32.3% of residents had L4+ qualifications compared to 45.1% nationally (2022) - to reach the national level requires 85,612 residents to gain a qualification at Level 4 and above.

At the other end of the scale, for the Black Country the percentage of the working age population with no qualifications was reported

as 10.6% (2022) - to reach the national level requires 26,914 residents to gain a qualification.

In 2022, there were 447,000 jobs in the Black Country. Since 2021, there has been an increase of 0.2% (+1,000) however economic inactivity is a significant issue with nearly a quarter of the population inactive (24.8%).

Overall, the number of claimants as a percentage of residents aged 16 years and over was 4.6% compared to 2.8% for the UK (2023). Worryingly youth claimants remain stubbornly high with a Black Country rate of 7.1% compared to 4.0% nationally.

There are clear industrial strengths and opportunities in the economy, some expected and traditional, others more recent and unexpected. Broadly, the Black Country remains reliant on five key factors of employment and output creation: advanced manufacturing, business services, transport technologies, building technologies and environmental technologies. Of nine defined sectors³, Health & Wellbeing has the largest in terms of jobs, accounting for 18.1% (80,550) of total jobs (2022). Other highest increases are in advanced manufacturing and transport technologies. In contrast, the largest decline in real terms is in retail.

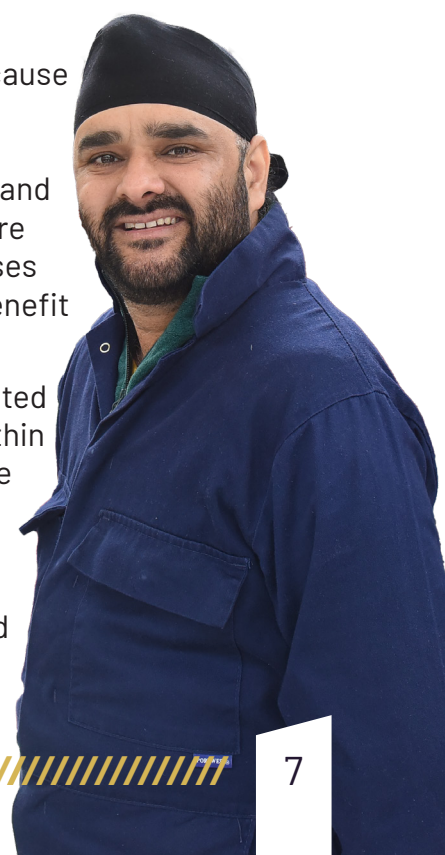
The West Midlands context

West Midlands (WM) is a landlocked county that borders the countries of Warwickshire to the east, Worcestershire to the south, and Staffordshire to the north and west. Many parts of the region have longstanding challenges to overcome, with well-rehearsed issues of high unemployment, low pay, skills shortages and limited social mobility.

Prior to the pandemic, the region's economy experienced unprecedented growth with rising productivity, jobs and employment - at levels that exceeded the rest of the UK. WM saw growth in high value-added sectors, new investments and infrastructure, and a growing digital capability, but the pandemic hit the

region hard - in part because of its dependency on automotive, aerospace, manufacturing, leisure, and hospitality sectors. There were significant job losses and large numbers of benefit claimants.

The pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities within the region. Young people and those from BME communities were hit hardest - particularly those least qualified and



living in areas with already high levels of unemployment and deprivation.

The WM economy is now beginning to recover, with employment levels rising, unemployment below pre-pandemic levels, and record vacancies. Many employers are reporting significant labour and skills shortages, and whilst some parts of the region have bounced back, others are recovering much more slowly, with the risk that some parts of the region have bounced back, others are recovering much more slowly, with the risk that some people and places are left behind and unable to share in the benefits of recovery.



The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has one of the highest regional rates in the UK. Unemployment in areas such as East Birmingham and higher youth unemployment in places such as Wolverhampton are of particular concern, as is the growing number of residents who are economically inactive due to disability and poor health.

Qualification levels across WM have improved but are still lower than the national average. Around 1 in 10 adults in the region have no formal qualifications, while just three-fifths are qualified to at least Level 3, compared with two-thirds nationally. As a result, many businesses report skills shortages, with around half of all vacancies in 2022 classed as 'hard to fill' and 35% vacant because of a lack of skills, qualifications or experience amongst applicants.

This WMCA Employment and Skills Strategy 2024-2027 sets out a vision for an integrated employment and skills system for the region, to stimulate economic growth, deliver better outcomes for residents and businesses, and create healthier thriving communities. Over the next three years, there is focus on four key pillars:

1. building strong and inclusive communities.
2. providing a good education up to Level 2.
3. supporting residents into-employment and supporting career progression.
4. meeting future skills needs at Level 3 and above through upskilling and reskilling.

3. Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

The College has a well-established and comprehensive annual curriculum and business planning process that it uses across delivery areas. This process is the key driver for developing its course and curriculum offer to reflect the needs of the community, the local employers, industry and demand from

its students. The cycle operates with a launch to provide national and regional context to all teams and managers involved in the process.

It utilises the latest labour market intelligence available to assist curriculum areas in developing their offer and requires them to also

³ Advanced manufacturing, Building Technologies, Business Services, Environmental Technologies, Health & Wellbeing, Public Sector, Retail, Transport Technologies, Visitor Economy.

consult with a range of local employers who are likely to employ our students in the future.

The planning cycle encompasses all forms of training and education offered, which includes:

- 16-18 Further Education vocational, T Level and A Level provision
- All age Apprentice provision delivered via standards
- Adult education
- Higher education
- Commercial Training

Review meetings take place with all delivery areas to interrogate plans to ensure they meet the needs of the different skills sectors, and that they will provide a quality and effective education. These curriculum plans, together with the College's purpose and Vision 2030: Action 2025 are the basis for developing the key priorities and outcomes within the accountability statement.

Consultation with a range of stakeholders covers:

- The College is one of the founder members of the 'anchor network', in addition to City of Wolverhampton Council, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, University of Wolverhampton and Wolverhampton Homes who have joined forces to commit to spending more money within the city and working with businesses, communities and voluntary sector to retain local wealth, create new jobs and opportunities for residents. The Principal and CEO is also Chair of the Wolverhampton Education, Skills and Employment Board.
- Leaders and Managers have strong engagement with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) which has led to increased funding through the success of delivered initiatives, that in turn yield positive outcomes for residents of employment and progression.

- City of Wolverhampton College is also part of a formal strategic partnership - Colleges West Midlands that is made up of another 17 colleges, including all colleges within the WMCA area, working together to support skills development across regions, responding as a single voice to initiatives and Government reforms. This collaborative approach supports a joint promotion of the offer to all residents in the West Midlands through a centralised prospectus. This contributes toward a combined effort to drive up the skills base in our regions, contribute to increased economic prosperity, social cohesion and inward investment.
- The College consults heavily with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Working with Jobcentre Plus (JCP) the College enables an offer of services to help individuals gain or change employment through specific work enabling programmes.
- The College engages with local high school partners, parents and carers in order to promote progression opportunities and improve school leaver participation. The College also works with the University of Wolverhampton to develop a curriculum offer that widens participation and supports progression.



National skills priorities areas

National skills priorities have been agreed across Government and are areas with high volumes of vacancies which are expected to increase; long-term structural barriers to recruitment, retention and progression issues; and are important in providing opportunities for employment in key growth areas such as green jobs, creative industries and science and technology (including AI and quantum computing). These sectors are:

- Construction
- Engineering and Manufacturing
- Digital and Technology

- Health and Social Care
- Haulage and Logistics
- Science and Mathematics

Education policy also asks that further education colleges focus on a small number of programmes, namely T Levels, Apprenticeships, Free Courses for Jobs, Skills Bootcamps and Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs). Providers are also expected to offer essential skills up to Level 2 in English and mathematics and Level 1 in Digital.

Local Skills Improvement Plans

Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) are regional research reports identifying skills gaps, available provision and local employability landscapes which detail how local areas aim to fill their skills gaps. The West Midlands and Warwickshire LSIP sets out the key priorities and changes needed in a local labour market needs.

The first priority is to target key sectors crucial to the growth of the region as set out by the West Midlands Combined Authority, through the promotion of training and education

provision but also to invest in new facilities and courses where appropriate. Key sectors include Engineering & Manufacturing, Construction; ICT & Digital and Logistics & Distribution. The second priority is the provision of excellent, flexible leadership and management training in both specific and general topics to help facilitate business growth.

The plan also responds to employer requests for greater levels of essential skills for work and workplace digital skills.

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

The WMCA through their Strategic Economic Plan identifies seven transformational sectors, key to driving current and future growth prospects for the region. Forecasts show that these sectors will continue to drive the supply and demand of skills in coming years. These are:

- Automotive and Advanced Manufacturing
- Business Professional and Financial Services
- Construction

- Life Sciences and Social Care
- Logistics and Transport Technologies
- Digital and Creative



4. Contributions to meeting national, regional and local needs

Contribution			Priorities	
College Aim		LSIP	National Skills	WMCA
<p>1. Increase numbers of young people, including those with Special Education Needs (SEN), meeting needs driven by demographic growth in Wolverhampton.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and invigorate withstanding curriculum so that the offer is directly aligned to meeting needs and seeks to maintain high levels of educational attainment and positive destination outcomes. <i>Increase youth students based on allocation to 2,279 (2,203: 22/23).</i> Ensure curriculum development innovation is shaped by employers and every area is endorsed by a named employer. Invigorate a withstanding curriculum for SEN students that focusses on preparation for adulthood and access employment for individuals, where this is a goal. <i>Increase SEN students to 260 (230: 22/23).</i> Increase offer of T Levels in line with key sector areas of developing capital and facilities that have clear progression opportunities. Develop mutually beneficial employer partnership to provide a wide range of Industry Placements. <i>Increase T Level students to 100 (15 22/23).</i> Form clear progression routes that is considerate of the changing educational landscape and includes university and professional level programmes. <i>Overall positive destination min. 92% (91%: 22/23).</i> Provide opportunities for young people to gain essential skills for employment, such as English, maths, digital and soft skills so they are suitably equipped and work ready. Ensure Employer Advisory Boards are fully established and operational in all identified sector areas – and establish a mechanism to measure impact. 	<p>Engineering & Manufacturing Construction ICT & Digital Essential Skills</p>	<p>Construction Engineering & Manufacturing Digital & Technology Health & Social Care Science & Mathematics</p>	<p>Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Business Professional & Financial Services Construction Life Sciences & Social Care Logistics & Transport Technologies Digital & Creative</p>

2. Increase direct delivery of adult provision and which proactively engages to upskill the regional workforce by helping people learn throughout their lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and invigorate withstanding curriculum so that the offer is directly aligned to government initiatives that has clear progression routes for opportunities for employment or upskilling which meet local and regional skills. <i>Overall positive destinations min. 89% (90%: 22/23).</i> Develop opportunities for more students to access the Transport, Rail and Infrastructure Academy in response to investment made to the public transport system in the West Midlands. Ensure the relevant provision that is created for adults has suitable employer links that will support a decrease in Wolverhampton's Claimant Count. Provide accessible provision for adults from differing communities to increase their opportunities for progression onto vocational learning or a move directly into employment. Collaborate with employers and stakeholders to support recruitment and selection, continued professional development and preparation for future skills. Utilise initiatives including Multiply to ensure adults gain core transferable skills which support progression. Ensure Employer Advisory Boards are fully established and operational in all identified sector areas - and establish a mechanism to measure impact. 	Engineering & Manufacturing Construction ICT & Digital L&M Essential Skills	Construction Engineering & Manufacturing Digital & Technology Health & Social Care Science & Mathematics	Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Business Professional & Financial Services Construction Life Sciences & Social Care Logistics & Transport Technologies Low Carbon & Environment Technologies
3. Improve quality and outcomes on apprenticeship provision towards supporting growth in key sector areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving out apprenticeship provision to be judged as Good by OFSTED. Ensure the quality of education that apprentices receive enables them to be successful and achieve grades of which they are capable. Overall outcomes 55% (49.2%: 22/23). Work with employers to progress the apprenticeship agenda through the development of essential skills and practical experience to address shortages. Offer a range of standards aligned to local and regional strategic importance, in particular construction related areas and engineering. <i>Achieve 2.5 or higher rating in employer and apprentice feedback.</i> 	Engineering & Manufacturing Construction Essential Skills	Construction Engineering & Manufacturing	Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Business Professional & Financial Services

4. Develop an offer of high technical qualifications and professional development opportunities that lead to upskilling and career promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch and invigorate withstanding curriculum an offer where students and apprentices can access a range of higher technical skills that supports career longevity and progression. <i>Increase numbers to 200 (140: 22/23).</i> Ensure there is an offer of professional and higher-level development and upskilling opportunities that enables individuals to progress within their workplace or career. Create an offer to support the strategic leadership capabilities across the local area and region. Co-create opportunities through the engagement with key partners and employer in key sectors of importance. Explore the market of Higher Apprenticeships. 	Engineering & Manufacturing Construction ICT & Digital L&M Essential Skills	Construction Engineering & Manufacturing Digital & Technology Health & Social Care	Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Business Professional & Financial Services Construction Life Sciences & Social Care Digital & Creative
5. Financial Health will be maintained at 'Good' or better and deliver the College's Estates Strategy to creating industry standard facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring our continued strong financial health to secure project funding and continuing to innovate our curriculum to meet local skills needs. Raising the profile of City of Wolverhampton College as a brand to attract and retain staff into education. Deliver the Estates Strategy, providing high class, industry standard learning facilities that matches high class delivery for residents of Wolverhampton as part of a City Learning Quarter. Continue the College's plans to reduce carbon emissions and roll out of the College's Sustainability Strategy - Defining Green Futures. 	Engineering & Manufacturing Construction ICT & Digital L&M Essential Skills	Construction Engineering & Manufacturing Digital & Technology Health & Social Care	Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing Business Professional & Financial Services Construction Life Sciences & Social Care Digital & Creative

5. Corporation Statement

We are committed to complying with our duty under a new section 52B of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 to review provision in relation to local needs, as proposed in the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill 2022.

On behalf of the City of Wolverhampton College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the College plan as set out above reflects an agreed

statement of purpose, aims and outcomes as approved by the Corporation at their meeting 10 June 2024.

The plan will be published on City of Wolverhampton College website and can be accessed from the following link <https://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/our-college/college-documents-policies/>



Mike Hastings
Chair of Governors

Dated: June 2024



Malcolm Cowgill
Principal and Chief Executive

Dated: June 2024

Supporting Documentation

City of Wolverhampton College documents:

- [Financial Statements](#)
- Strategic Development Implementation Plan
- Curriculum Strategy
- [2023 OFSTED Report](#)

City of Wolverhampton Council [Our City: Our Plan](#)

[West Midlands and Warwickshire Local Skills Improvement Plan](#)

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) documents:

- [Strategic Economic Plan](#)
- [Regional Skills Plan](#)
- [West Midlands Plan for Growth](#)

[West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy](#)