

Waltham Forest College 

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT 2025/26



About us

Waltham Forest College is a diverse medium-sized General Further Education College located in north-east London. The College provides education programmes for circa 7000 students including: young people, adults, apprentices, and learners with high needs. In 2024/25 around 2600 students at the College were aged between 16-18 years. Ofsted rated the College as outstanding and judged it to be 'strongly' meeting skills' needs. Waltham Forest College has an outstanding financial health rating. As an anchor institution and the one of the largest employers in the borough, is accredited as a Good Work Employer and has recently been named as one of the Sunday Times Best Places to Work in the UK 2025. Waltham Forest College is an integral part of the local and regional community, equipping local people with the skills that employers need, and enabling learners to progress to positive destinations.

The College invests in a Local Market Intelligence data system and effectively uses LMI data, as well as working closely with employer representative bodies including: CBI, BusinessLDN, Greater London Authority, Barts NHS, Job Centre Plus, Waltham Forest Council, Local London, Job Centre Plus and local employers to inform curriculum developments. This ensures the curriculum offer aligns to meet local and regional needs and priorities. Through effective partnerships, the College has been highly responsive and has been able to adapt provision swiftly to meet changing local and regional economic needs as well as national policy changes.

The College makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs. Leaders have thoughtfully created a broad curriculum offer that aligns exceptionally well with the skills needs in their local and regional areas. They have a thorough understanding of the skills needs in east London and beyond. They carefully use labour market information to identify and respond to the key strategic priorities of the region (Ofsted Report, 2024).

The College benefits from an extensive range of partnerships with local, regional, and national employers, supporting learners to develop their skills and progress to great careers, forming the highly skilled, resilient, and adaptable workforce that employers need. Learners are equipped with the confidence to actively participate in their communities, significantly contributing to social cohesion and inclusion within the local region.

Our Mission

To empower individuals and communities to reimagine the possible, achieve greater, and shape a better future by fostering ambition, innovation, and transformative opportunities.

Our Purpose

To prepare learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to enter employment and progress their careers, forming the highly skilled, resilient, and adaptable workforce that employers need. Learners are equipped with the confidence to actively participate in their communities, significantly contributing to social cohesion and inclusion within the region.

Our Values

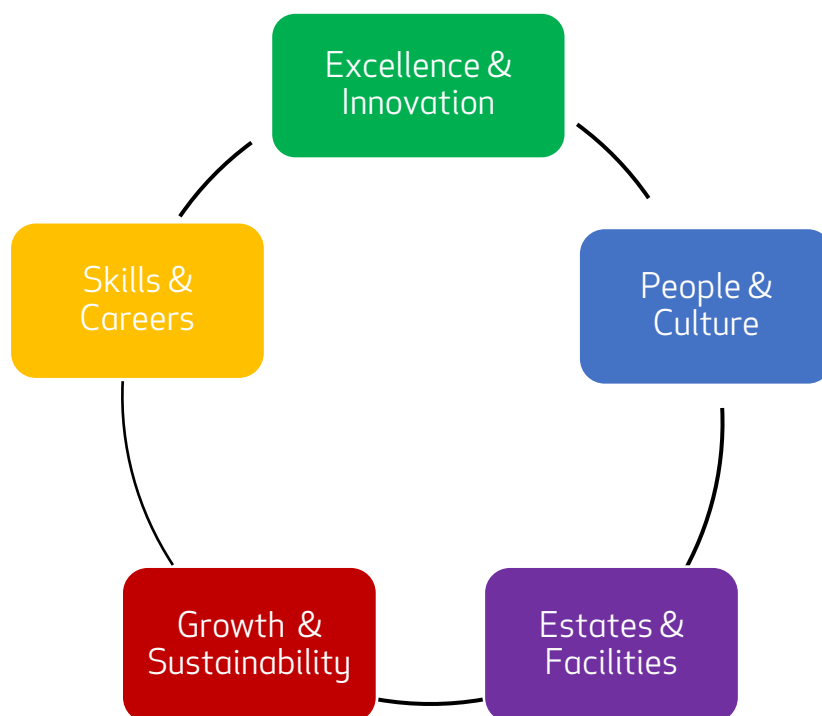
We are a people focused organisation, driven by strong values that are deeply embedded within our #TeamForest culture; Developed collaboratively with our staff and students, our values form the foundation of our interactions, shaping behaviours and fostering a culture of high expectations and mutual respect.

INTEGRITY

EXCELLENCE

INCLUSION

Our Strategic Priorities



Strategic Aims 2030

SP NO.	Strategic Priorities	Strategic Priority Aims
1	Excellence & Innovation	To expand the College's influence and reputation, built on excellence and innovation, ensuring Waltham Forest College is an aspirational college of choice, where students' flourish and achieve their full potential
2	People & Culture	To be an employer of choice, offering an inclusive, equitable and ambitious place of work
3	Skills & Future Careers	To prepare learners with the skills needed to progress their careers, forming the skilled, resilient, and adaptable workforce that employers need
4	Growth & Sustainability	To be a strong and resilient organisation able to invest for future growth, sustainability, and innovation
5	Estates & Facilities	To provide a high quality and sustainable learning environment that can respond to future skills needs and growing demand

Place

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is diverse, both ethnically and socially, with 97 languages spoken by learners at the College; the top five languages spoken locally, other than English, are Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Turkish and Lithuanian. The London Borough of Waltham Forest is also one of the boroughs with the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers. The borough is home to an estimated 271,200 residents and about half the residents are from a minority ethnic background. The average salary in the borough is lower than the London average, at £30,900. Waltham Forest is currently ranked 35th most deprived borough nationally according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Only 32% of the residents have secondary qualifications as their highest academic achievement, while 25% are with either no schooling or only up to primary level education. Waltham Forest College is on the lowest quartile for qualifications on entry (starting points) according

to Mides data, with around 60% of students starting without an English or maths GCSE at grade 4 or above. The majority of employers in the area (93%) are micro-businesses, employing fewer than 10 people.

Travel to learn patterns highlight the College attracts learners from a wide catchment area across north-east London, including Waltham Forest, Haringey, Enfield, Redbridge, and Newham.



Waltham Forest is one of the boroughs that make up the Local London sub-region. Local London is one of four sub-regions in London and is a Leader / Mayor-led partnership of nine London boroughs comprising of Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Greenwich, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, and Waltham Forest. The region covers 2.6 million people and 100,000 businesses.

The economy in the local London region has performed better than the rest of London in recent years. The total number of employees in employment in Local London increased by nearly 10% since 2016, which represents a larger increase than in London or Great Britain (9.7% in Local London compared with 8.4% in London and 5.7% in Great Britain). However, across the whole of London, the number of residents falling into the 'in work poverty' is still one of the highest in the country. This highlights some of the inequalities and disadvantage barriers that Londoners face. As a response to this, the College has tailored its provision to try and mitigate barriers facing those farthest away from the labour market with specialist provision for the unemployed, prison leavers, refugees and asylum seekers and those with English as an additional language. This supports the cross-cutting theme of Labour Market Inclusion.

As the travel to learn patterns highlight, the College serves communities and employers within and outside of the Local London region (many of which include areas of high deprivation, and so this together with aligning to the Mayoral priorities for London, means the College considers the wider overall London priorities when developing its curriculum offer.

Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

Waltham Forest College has developed highly effective strategic partnerships with employers and key stakeholders such as Barts NHS, Job Centre Plus, London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), Greater London Authority (GLA), BusinessLDN and Local London as well as a range of diverse small local employers. Through its effective partnerships and collaborations, the College is highly responsive and adapts provision swiftly in order to meet changing local economic and social needs.

The College works in collaboration with other providers for example:

- Colleges across the Local London region worked in partnership as part of the SDF and LSIF projects to develop expertise and skills in green technologies. This successful project shared expertise amongst staff and investment in specialist equipment and facilities in colleges and supported a Regional Retrofit Centre at Waltham Forest College which includes the latest smart homes technologies and Passiv Haus
- Waltham Forest College worked in collaboration with The Local London partnership and the eight boroughs to secure teaching immersive suites for all of the colleges across the sub region, further helping develop the digital skills and technologies within providers
- The College works closely with the Adult Learning Service in Waltham Forest Council, and other providers as well as community groups to support with the 'no wrong door' initiative. This facilitates a single point of contact and supports new arrivals and asylum seekers to be supported with ESOL and basic skills such as English, maths and digital skills, as well as other support through effective and streamlined referral services across collaborating institutions within the local region.

The College is represented on several strategic boards to inform and influence policy and respond to skills needs. These include Co-Chair of Hiring & Skills Group, part of GLA London Anchor Institutions' Network; Mayor of London's Partnership Board member, The Mayor of London's London Growth Plan Mission Board, Co-opted board member of the CBI London Council, CBI Education & Skills Working Group, LBWF Adults Skills Strategy Board; LBWF Post 16 Education Strategy Group, Borough of Sanctuary Strategy Group, Chair of AoC London Region and AoC national board member, Chair of British Association of Construction Heads, London Region. This helps inform the College's strategic and curriculum planning and ensures the College is at the forefront of the skills agenda, meeting skills' needs.

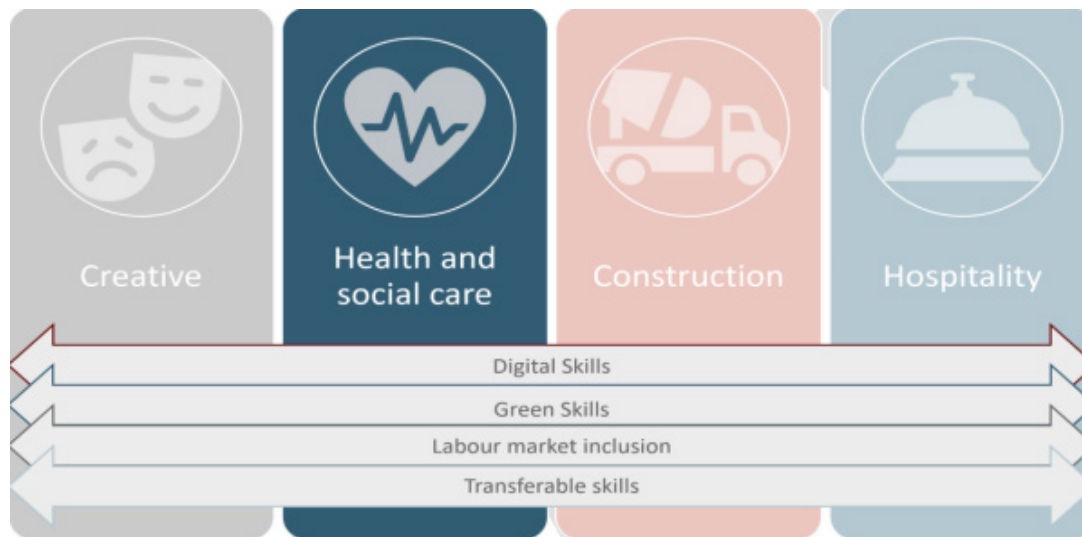
Introduction

The Accountability Agreement is part of the government's reforms to Post 16 Education and Skills, that set out statutory duties (Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022) for providers to contribute towards meeting local, regional and national skills needs. Providers should pay due regard to priorities identified by the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) within their region as well as national priorities and sectors.

As such the College has developed a range of partnerships to further develop the curriculum to ensure it continues to be responsive to skills needs and considers the LSIP priorities for London, London Growth Plan, the Government's Five Missions to Rebuild Britain, as well as the skills sector priorities identified in the Industrial Strategy (known as the IS-8).

In London, much of the Adult Skills funding is devolved to the Mayor of London, who has specific key priority areas that recipients of AEB funding need to meet, aligned to London's Growth Plan. The College works closely with BusinessLDN and the Greater London Authority for development and progress of the LSIP and the College is represented on the Mayor of London's Mission Board to drive London's economy and ensure the Growth Plan is delivered.

Four priority sectors have been identified through the LSIP for London: Creative, Health & Social Care, Construction and Hospitality. In addition, there are four cross cutting themes that run through all sectors; digital, green skills, transferable skills and labour market inclusion.



London Growth Plan

‘The London Growth Plan sets out the blueprint for how the capital will deliver its own growth mission over the course of the next decade, and boost London’s economy in a fairer, greener, and more inclusive way. A shortage of skilled workers is one of the biggest constraints holding back London’s growth. The London economy cannot achieve its full potential until all Londoners achieve their full potential. Low skills, low economic participation and pay that doesn’t cover living costs are leaving too many Londoners in poverty’ (London Growth Plan 2025).

The Greater London Authority is developing an inclusive Talent Strategy due to be released later this year which will further support the delivery of the London Growth Plan. The College as co-chair of the Hiring and Skills Group, which is part of the London Anchor Institutions network has supported with this development.

Key Sector Growth Areas in London highlighted in the London Growth Plan are:

- Financial, professional, and business services and technology
- Creative industries and technologies
- International education
- Experience economy
- Frontier innovation

The UK government has identified five missions (GM). In alignment with these national priorities, the Mayor of London (MoL) has adopted the same five missions and has added a sixth on delivering more affordable housing for London.

- Driving economic growth
- Reducing crime
- Transitioning to clean energy
- Improving opportunities for children,
- Improving the NHS.
- Delivering more affordable housing

The Industry Strategy highlights eight sectors known as the IS-8 as having the most pressing issues and highest potential to support economic growth. These are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Creative Industries
- Life Sciences

- Clean Energy
- Defence
- Digital & Technologies
- Professional & Business Services
- Financial Services

Impact - Contribution to local, regional and national priorities for 2024/25

Over the past 12 months the College has continued to make a significant contribution to meeting skills needs by working in partnership with key employers and stakeholders to meet regional and national skills priorities. These have included:

- Development of specialist skills hubs:
 - Health & Life Sciences Hub in partnership with Barts NHS Trust and Barts Life Sciences
 - Employment and skills Hub in partnership with JobCentre Plus
 - Business Growth Hub in partnership with Grow London Local
- Investment in new Creative and film editing suite to meet demand in this growth sector
- Investment in new Digital and Mac suites to meet growing demand of this cross-cutting theme
- Green and Retro-fit centre to meet demand for increased retrofitting of existing homes and to support the ambitious new house building targets
- Expansion of engineering and construction provision to meet rising demand from employers
- Bespoke provision to support new arrivals and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, developed in partnership with the Council and community groups
- Sector based work academies in partnership with Job Centre Plus, for the unemployed in Retail and Hospitality
- Sector based work academies in partnership with the Probation Service supporting prison leavers
- Increased provision to support those furthest from the job market

The College continued to play a leading role as an Anchor Institution and key employer and demonstrated its commitment by continuing to be accredited as a London Living Wage and Good Work Employer, Care Leavers Employer, Disability Confident Employer. The College also became accredited as a College of Sanctuary in 2025, further reinforcing its commitment to inclusion and support for its local communities.

Accountability Agreement Objectives for 2025-26

WFC Strategic Priorities	5 Government Missions plus 6 th Mayor of London's Mission	The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (IS), London LSIP (LSIP) and GLA London Growth Plan Sectors (LGP)	Performance Indicators
Excellence & Innovation	Improving the NHS Driving economic growth Transitioning to clean energy	IS-3 Life Sciences LSIP-2 Health & Social Care LSIP cross cutting theme of Green Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality teaching, learning and assessment leading to outcome of learners exceeding national positive progression for learners of at least 92% • Sector based work academies to secure at least 85% sustained employment for learners • Further develop the new Barts NHS Life Sciences and Health Hub partnership to upskill 200 NHS workforce and provide opportunities to support progression for college learners, including clinical placements for T level students • Further develop employer partnerships to support training for green skills and retrofit; 100 learners to receive training/upskilling through the Passiv Haus centre • Work collaboratively with providers across London to deliver Inter-College skills competition, promoting excellence and skills in vocational/technical priority sectors – March 2026
People & Culture	Driving economic growth Improving opportunities for children Reducing crime Removing barriers to employment for those for those most disadvantaged LSIP cross cutting theme of labour market inclusion	IS-3 Life Sciences LSIP-2 Health & Social Care IS-7 Professional & Business Services LGP – Good Work Employer & London Living Wage employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with accreditation of Good Work Employer and London Living Wage, implementing new increase to London Living Wage by December 2025 • Continue to be accredited as a Care Leaver Employer and College, offering additional support and opportunities for care leavers • Continue with accreditation for whole college Matrix standard offering exceptional support for careers, embedded across the organisation <p>Target adult provision to tailor and support those most disadvantaged; recruit by June 2026:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 834 newly unemployed • 1484 long term unemployed • 658, 19-23 year old Londoners • 1234 BAME adult learners • 576 disabled Londoners • 562 Londoners aged over 50 • 731- Low waged learners • 1218- with learning support • Expand provision for ex-offenders through partnership with the Probation Service and employers to secure positive outcomes and sustained employment by January 2026 • Develop later starting courses tailored to support young people at risk of becoming NEET (3 programmes by March 2026)
Skills & Future Careers	<p>Driving economic growth</p> <p>Delivering more Affordable housing</p> <p>Improving opportunities for children</p> <p>Transitioning to clean energy</p> <p>Improving the NHS</p>	<p>IS-1 Advanced Manufacturing</p> <p>IS-2 Creative Industries</p> <p>LGP-2 Creative industries and technologies</p> <p>LSIP-1 Creative</p> <p>IS-3 Life Sciences</p> <p>LSIP-2 Health & Social Care</p> <p>IS-4 Clean Energy</p> <p>IS-5 Defence</p> <p>IS-6 Digital & Technologies</p> <p>IS-6 Professional & Business Services</p> <p>IS-8 Financial Services</p> <p>LGP-1 Financial, professional & business services & technology</p> <p>LGP-4 Experience economy</p> <p>LSIP- 3 Construction</p> <p>LSIP-4 Hospitality</p> <p>LSIP cross cutting themes of Transferable Skills</p> <p>LSIP cross cutting theme of Green Skills</p> <p>LSIP cross cutting theme of digital skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce T level Design & Development in Engineering & Manufacturing September 2025 • Introduce T Level in Design Surveying & Planning for Construction September 2025 • Introduce T Level in Legal, Finance & Accounting September 2025 • Introduce T level in Craft & Design (Textiles & Fashion) for September 2025 • Expand provision for Uniformed Public Services by 1 cohort by November 2025 • Develop at least 10 new vocational/technical programme in priority sectors by December 2026 • Continue to develop new pathways for apprentices particularly in areas to support housebuilding and infrastructure projects and grow apprenticeships by an additional 100 learners by June 2026 • Ensure 100% of study programme students completing Skills Builder employability skills July 2026 • Develop short programmes in Hospitality meet growth in demand to upskills workforce and entry points for employment – 1 cohort per term

Growth & Sustainability	Driving economic growth Delivering more affordable housing	IS-2 Creative Industries LGP-2 Creative industries and technologies LSP-1 Creative IS-3 Life Sciences LSIP-2 Health & Social Care IS-6 Professional & Business Services LGP-1 Financial Services Financial, professional & business services & technology LGP-4 Experience economy LGP-5 Frontier innovation LSIP- 3 Construction LSIP-4 Hospitality	Grow provision and Increase enrolments by June 2026 in priority sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction +20% - Auto & Engineering +15% - Health & Care +5% - Business & legal +10% - Hospitality +25% - IT & digital +25% - Creative – 25% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 100% of all funding stream allocations by July 2026 • Further develop new Partnership with Grow London Local to support new local start-ups and micro/SMEs – 50 small business supported by July 2026
Estates & Facilities	Transitioning to clean energy Driving economic growth Delivering more affordable housing	IS-1 Advanced Manufacturing IS-4 Clean Energy IS-5 Digital & Technologies LGP-5 Frontier innovation LSIP- 3 Construction LGP-4 Experience economy LSIP-4 Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in new engineering and manufacturing workshop to meet demand September 2025 • Continue to replace Victorian plumbing and facilities across the estate to reduce water leaks and inefficiencies - at last two more toilet blocks by December 2025 • Investment in new Brick workshop to accommodate demand by September 2025 • Continue to invest in sustainability and green technologies and reduce the carbon footprint of the college across the estate by 10% - July 2026

Corporation Statement

On behalf of Waltham Forest College Corporation, it is hereby confirmed that the College Plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the Corporation in July 2025. The Corporation will regularly review progress of the agreed aims and objectives to monitor progress and impact.

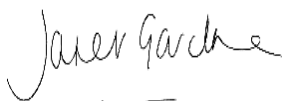
The Accountability Agreement will be published on the College website within three months of the start of the academic year.

Paul Butler



Chair of Governors

Janet Gardner



Principal and CEO