

Annual Accountability Statement 2024-25

1. 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; for Waltham Forest College (the College) this is London.

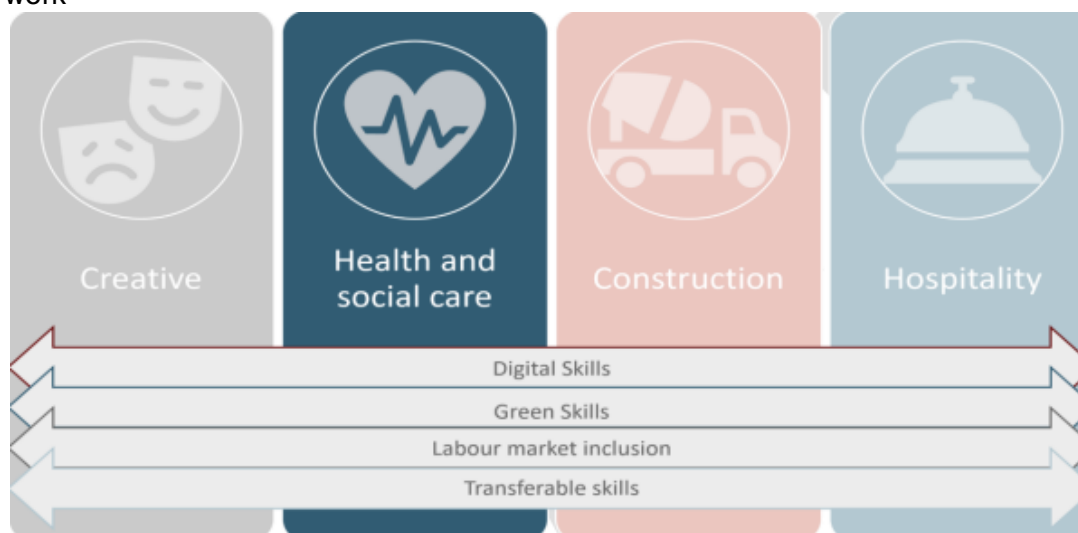
"The LSIP is a statutory employer led and data-driven plan for understanding current and future skills needs. Its purpose is to better match training provision to employer demand, to boost pay and productivity across the capital. The actions in this LSIP set out a roadmap to meeting current and future employer skills needs, so that businesses, educators and training providers can respond. LSIPs emerged as one of the Government's priorities in its Skills for Jobs White Paper and subsequent Skills and Post -16 Education Bill, building on the Government's aspiration to put employers at the heart of the skills system" (BusinessLDN, London LSIP).

In London much of the Adult Skills funding is devolved to the Mayor of London, who also has specific key priority areas that recipients of AEB funding need to meet. The College has worked with BusinessLDN throughout the development of the LSIP and plans and delivers its provision to closely align to the Mayor of London's priorities.

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.

These sectors:

- Had a substantial and/or growing number of vacancies, with employers reporting acute skills challenges that were inhibiting their recovery and growth
- Had identified skills needs at Level 3 and below (therefore corresponding to the Adult Education Budget provision)
- Had potential to improve diversity and representation – for those who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and faced pre-existing barriers to learning and work



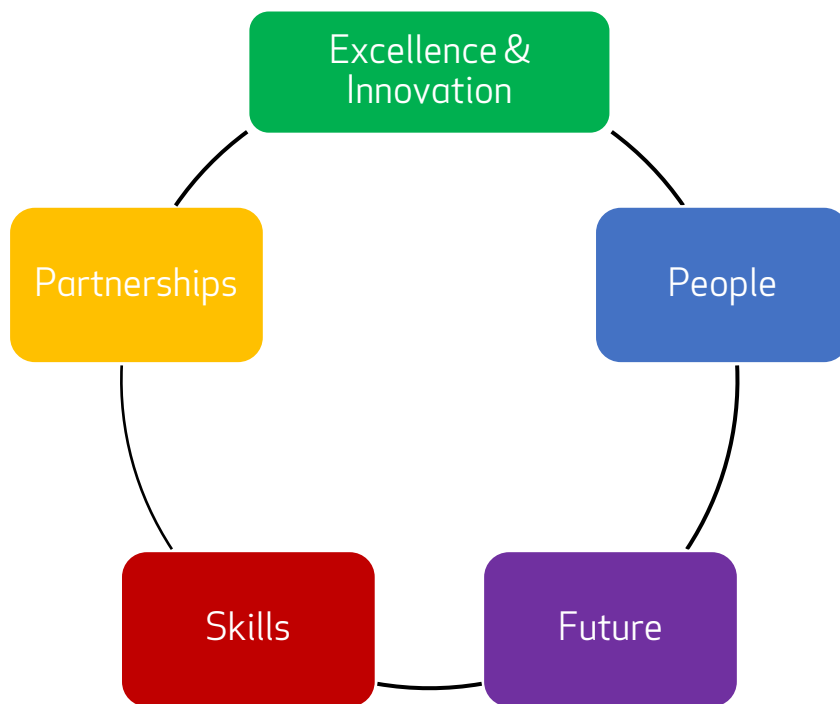
2. Purpose

Waltham Forest College has been supporting its local communities with education and skills for 85 years. The College's mission is:

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.

Waltham Forest College has one overarching strategic priority which underpins everything it does: **Excellence and Innovation**; this is underpinned by interconnected priorities: People, Partnerships, Skills and Future.

Our Values



We are a people focused organisation, with strong values embedded into our **#TeamForest** culture.



3. Context and Place

Waltham Forest College is a medium-sized General Further Education College in North- East London and operates from a single campus. The College provides education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and provision for learners with high needs across a full range of technical and vocational areas ranging from pre-entry level to level 5.

Waltham Forest College supports around 7000 learners, of which just over 2250 are aged between 16-18 years of age.

The achievement rates for learners are well above the national average and the College is ranked in the top performing 3% of GFE colleges nationally for learner outcomes; 93% of learners progress to a positive destination. Waltham Forest College achieved an Outstanding rating by Ofsted following its inspection in March 2024

As an anchor institution and the third largest employer in the borough, 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 and BusinessLDN and with Greater London Authority, Waltham Forest Council, Local London, Job Centre Plus and other external stakeholders 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 in order to meet changing local and regional economic needs as well as national policy changes. This is reinforced by Ofsted in the inspection report:

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.

Leaders are highly effective at making sure that the courses they offer meet the needs of the growing number of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in their local borough. For example, leaders offer courses that are suitable for refugees and asylum seekers. They have redesigned the employability and ESOL programmes to ensure learners develop the English skills and professional behaviours they need to work in high-demand sectors such as childcare and construction.

Senior leaders play a crucial role as members of local, regional and national skills forums. They have a significant impact in shaping the policies related to skills needs. Leaders engage exceptionally well with a broad range of stakeholders, such as employer representative bodies, sub-regional partners, local authorities and funding authorities. They work collaboratively with the Greater London Authority and other local further education providers to plan courses carefully that provide a rich choice for learners across Waltham Forest.

Leaders work exceptionally well with employers and industry experts to plan and teach the curriculums offered. For example, restaurant owners and industry specialists provide expert advice on the content of the level 3 cookery curriculum to ensure learners can gain employment in the hospitality sector. In the vast majority of subjects, learners and apprentices frequently benefit from guest speakers and attend workshops taught by subject specialists and leading employers. As a result, learners and apprentices learn the most up-to-date skills needed for industry.

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is a diverse and vibrant borough, with around 271,200 residents; half the local residents are from a minority ethnic background. The large majority of employers in the area (93%) are micro-businesses, employing fewer than 10 people. Waltham Forest is currently ranked 35th most deprived Borough nationally according to the 2015 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.

Travel to learn patterns highlight the College attracts learners from a wide catchment area across North and East London, including Waltham Forest, Haringey, Enfield, Redbridge, Newham, Hackney, Barking and Dagenham.



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 further 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.

London is home to around 8.8 million people and accounts for over 20% jobs in the country and 28% of the economic output. Research by the Greater London Authority found that over the last decade, employment opportunities in London have increased by over 25% with total workforce jobs rose to 6.3 million in the latest period (December 2022). The composition of the labour market varies across London, with sectors such as business, finance and IT more prevalent in concentrated areas whereas sectors such as Construction, Health and Social Care, Creative and Hospitality are more widely distributed across the capital.

Nearly a third of employers are struggling to recruit to live vacancies with highly specialist roles the hardest to recruit. Digital Skills at all levels as well as basic English and maths together with transferable skills (also known as employability skills) are set to continue to be key skillsets employers need in the next 2-5 years. In addition, a growing need for green skills across sectors has been highlighted as cross cutting theme.

4. Approach to developing the annual accountability statement

Waltham Forest College has developed highly effective strategic partnerships with employers and key stakeholders such as the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF), Greater London Authority (GLA), BusinessLDN and Local London. The College uses these strategic partnerships to inform and respond to local, regional and national needs. Around 93% of businesses in the London Borough of Waltham Forest are SMEs or micro businesses.

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, 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.

Waltham Forest College contributed to the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and the College has repositioned its curriculum to align to key priority areas. This has led to a growth in enrolments to meet local demand.

- +49% in Construction, Engineering and the Built Environment
- +16% in Creative Industries
- +36.5% in Health & Care
- +73% in Hospitality
- +89% in Digital

A cross cutting theme for the LSIP is Labour Market Inclusion, with a focus on developing skills for disadvantaged groups of Londoners. The college has swiftly responded, and targeted provision has increased the number of adult learners from disadvantaged groups supported with training and skills over the past year including:

- Newly Unemployed increased by +351 people
- Unemployed (12 months or more) +346 people
- Disabled Londoners +231 people
- Older Londoners aged 50 and over +269 people
- Low waged Londoners +800 people

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.
- The College works closely with the Adult Learning Service in Waltham Forest Council, including seconding College staff to the borough, to support with the 'no wrong door' policy. This facilitates a single point of contact and enables residents to be supported with ESOL and basic skills such as English, maths and digital skills, through effective and streamlined referral services across collaborating institutions within the local region.

The College is represented on several local, regional and national boards which ensures it is contributing towards the ongoing research and development of policies and priorities. Some examples include the Mayor of London's Anchor Institution Hiring and Skills Group with key employers and the Mayor of London's Partnership Board with key stakeholders across London, Green Skills Advisory Board, London Borough of Waltham Forest Adult Skills Board and South-East Region Job Centre Plus Partnership.

Through its effective partnerships, the College is able to be highly responsive and adapt provision swiftly in order to meet changing local economic and social needs.

5. Contribution to local, regional and national priorities for 2024/25

Priority Skills Areas

Aims and Objectives	Contribution towards National, Regional and Local Learning and Skills Priorities	Timeframe	Progress
<p>Priority Skills Areas: Construction, Health & Social Care, Creative, Hospitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the skills, expertise and capacity of the future workforce to meet the skills needs identified in the LSIP Increase provision to address skills shortages and support higher demand for technical specialist roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop the curriculum in collaboration with employers and key stakeholders to continue to align to LSIP priority areas. Increase learner recruitment compared to 2023/24, in key priority sectors Continue to invest in industry standard facilities and equipment to meet the skills needs required in industry Develop new T level pathways for 2024/25 offer 	<p>September 2024</p> <p>June 2025</p> <p>April 2025</p> <p>September 2024</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work in collaboration with Local London and a range of providers across the region to deliver LSIF priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with LSIF collaborative projects Deliver regional retro-fit centre Further develop partnership with NHS Continue to collaborate and share best practice with providers 	<p>April 2025</p> <p>June 2025</p>	
<p>Cross cutting theme – labour market inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop provision to meet future requirements and improve attainment to new labour market entrants and for those already in the workforce including sub-degree qualifications Provide opportunities and support to develop skills and confidence for Londoners from disadvantaged groups to progress to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation to training and employment from underrepresented groups as highlighted in the skills road map Provide opportunities to further develop skills and confidence to support the development of social skills 	<p>July 2025</p> <p>July 2025</p>	

6. 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 at their meeting on 29 June 2024. The Corporation will regularly review progress of the agreed aims and objectives to monitor progress and impact.

Paul Butler



Chair of Governors
Dated: 01/07/24

Janet Gardner



Principal and CEO
Dated: 01/07/24