



Cheshire College
South & West

Accountability Statement

2023-24

Inspire

Believe

Achieve



Purpose

Cheshire College's purpose is:

"Nurturing talent and empowering people to achieve their full potential; supporting businesses to succeed and communities to thrive."

The College is celebrating its sixth year of inception following the successful merger between South Cheshire College and West Cheshire College.

The College is dedicated to providing outstanding opportunities for its stakeholders, inspiring learners to excel and delivering the best possible outcomes for its staff, communities and employers.



Strategic Priorities

1

Our Teaching, Learning and Support

- 1.1** We will inspire all learners to achieve their full potential through consistent high-quality teaching, learning, assessment and support.
- 1.2** We will provide innovative and flexible teaching, learning, assessment and support, making best use of the latest technologies through blended learning.
- 1.3** We will provide our learners with a curriculum that develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to excel in employment and higher-level learning.
- 1.4** We will listen to and understand our learners in order to provide appropriate pastoral support for their personal development, resilience, confidence, health, social and emotional wellbeing.

2

Our People

- 2.1** We will value, respect and recognise the contribution of all colleagues.
- 2.2** We will retain, attract and recruit high calibre talent with shared values and a desire to excel.
- 2.3** We will enhance the performance and career opportunities for colleagues through highly effective Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- 2.4** We will maintain a positive culture where ownership, accountability and involvement in decision making is championed at all levels.
- 2.5** We will promote and support health and wellbeing opportunities for all colleagues.





3

Our Learning Environments

- 3.1** We will invest in a high-quality digital and data infrastructure to support blended learning and access to the latest technologies.
- 3.2** We will remove barriers to learning by providing all full-time learners access to a personal digital device.
- 3.3** We will implement a capital investment and rolling refurbishment programme that will deliver inspirational learning environments across all curriculum areas.
- 3.4** We will strive to develop an estate that is net zero carbon.

4

Our Finances

- 4.1** We will be a financially robust College by remaining efficient, offering value for money and maintaining a secure cash position.
- 4.2** We will seek out opportunities and apply for projects/grant applications that support the College's strategic aims.

5

Our Communities and Economic Contribution

- 5.1** We will ensure our Campuses are at the heart of the local communities that we serve.
- 5.2** We will work with local, regional and national agencies, partners and employers to deliver economic growth through an offer that meets current and future skills needs, including the development of higher-level technical programmes.

The Strategic Plan was approved by our Governing Body on 7 July 2022 and can be viewed [online](#).

Since its publication, national skills policy has continued to develop, therefore this annual accountability plan takes account of these changes, including the expected introduction of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry is the designated Employer Representative Body (ERB) for Cheshire & Warrington with responsibility for producing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). At the time of producing this statement the LSIP had not been published.

Cheshire College is also implementing a significant capital investment programme, drawing on funds such as the Further Education (FE) Capital Transformation Fund, T Level Capital Funding, Strategic Development Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This investment will support a drive to net zero and improved infrastructure across all three campuses to providing specialised curriculum linked to local needs.



Context and Place

Cheshire and Warrington is a region located in the North West of England, comprising the local authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington. The area is home to a diverse population of around 1 million people, with a mix of urban and rural communities. The population is predominantly White British, although there are significant ethnic minority communities in some areas.

The region has a mix of cities, towns, and villages, with the cities of Chester and Warrington being the largest urban centres. Other notable towns include Crewe, Ellesmere Port, Nantwich, Winsford and Wilmslow.

There are pockets of deprivation in some areas, particularly in the larger urban centres. The College serves major concentrations of population with main campuses in Chester (Cheshire West and Chester), Crewe (Cheshire East) and Ellesmere Port (Cheshire West and Chester). The College is highly responsive to the needs of its communities, with the highest levels of recruitment coming from the areas with greatest need.

The region has a strong industrial base, with strengths in sectors such as advanced manufacturing; the professional, scientific and technical sector; and the financial and insurance sector.

The local economy includes manufacturers such as Bentley Motors Ltd; major life science companies like AstraZeneca and Recipharm; significant energy and utilities companies including Engie, Sellafield (Warrington) and United Utilities; major retail finance centres, including the headquarters of M&S Bank and the credit card operations of Lloyds Bank; the global Innovation Centre of Barclays Bank; and the UK's largest outlet shopping centre at Cheshire Oaks. The region also has a strong agricultural sector, particularly in the production of dairy products, and is home to a number of rural communities.

Ellesmere Port

Chester

Crewe



Strengths of the Area

Numbers on payroll are now higher than pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic recovery in Cheshire and Warrington was faster than in some other areas.

Job density is high, and Cheshire and Warrington is a net importer of labour.

Sector strength - compared with England, Cheshire and Warrington has a higher percentage of employees employed in the Manufacturing sector, in the Retail sector, in Administrative and Support Service Activities, in Finance, in Transportation & Storage, and in the Professional, Scientific & Technical sector.



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Higher skilled - more residents are qualified at Level 3+ (i.e., Foundation Degree or Higher National Diploma and above) in Cheshire and Warrington than in England.

Well-informed and responsive FE - there is good alignment of FE delivery with those that need it, in the places where many of those people live. Additionally, more adults and young people travel into Cheshire and Warrington to learn than travel out, particularly at Level 3.

Employer training - a higher proportion of employers train their employees in Cheshire and Warrington than is the case in England.

Quality FE - the overall FE achievement rate and apprenticeship achievement rate for Cheshire and Warrington residents in 2018-19 was higher than for England, as was the achievement rate for 19+ FE and the achievement rates for 16-18 FE.

Higher technical skills - increasing levels of employer demand for higher technical skills are set to be met by the launch of the Institute of Technology.

58,800 are self-employed, representing 9.4% of the employed population, 1.5% higher than the northwest (7.9%), but at a similar level to the national rate.



Challenges

Aligning supply and demand - There is a mismatch between the skills employers need and the skills individuals choose to acquire, because not enough people get the information to make informed decisions about the subjects to study and the careers to follow.

Covid-19 impact and recovery - claimant unemployment is high. Whilst the numbers of claimant unemployed for less than a year are now below pre-pandemic levels, the level of 3yr + unemployment is more than three times higher. There have been large increases in economic inactivity and large declines in self-employment.

Too few employees receive training - 30% of Cheshire and Warrington employees earn less than the Real Living Wage. A lower proportion of employees receive training in Cheshire and Warrington compared to England, and a lower proportion of Cheshire and Warrington employees being trained towards qualifications than is the case for their English counterparts.

There is a growing gap for Level 3+ skills - Economic development and replacement demand will accelerate demand for Level 3+ skills (particularly digital and Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM)), but the annual volume of adult Level 3 achievements (c4.5k) will not deliver the volume of people required for Level 3+ roles by 2027, because the population is old and getting older, the number of Level 3+ qualified people leaving the workforce will exceed the number of Level 3 qualified 19-year-olds joining it.



Skill shortage vacancies and hard to fill vacancies reflect the Level 3+ gap – the gap for Level 3+ skills are being felt now. Employers in Cheshire and Warrington are more likely to have skills shortage vacancies in high skill roles & more likely to have bottom line business impacts because of skills shortages.

Low attainment of young people linked to place and disadvantage – disadvantage and place of residence constrains young people's progression and achievement.

Gender disparities in learning embed structural problems in the labour market - some occupations only draw on the talents of half of the population.



Approach to Developing the Annual Accountability Statement

The development of the Accountability Statement has been integrated into the annual College planning cycle, which includes curriculum, financial, estates and strategic planning processes, all of which are interdependent.

The College constantly engages with a range of local, regional and national stakeholders, to ensure students have a high-quality learning experience to gain the relevant skills, knowledge and confidence required to succeed. These stakeholders include:

Students

Apprentices

Individual Employers

Strategic Skills Advisory Board

Employer Advisory Boards

Prospective students and apprentices

Parents and carers

Staff

Governors

South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry

West Cheshire & North Wales Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Federation of Small Business

Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership

Crewe Town Investment Board

Ellesmere Port Development Board

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Cheshire East Council

MPs

Councillors

Local Residents

Neighbouring Colleges

Independent Training Providers

Local Schools (Primary and Secondary)

Universities

Cheshire East Leaders Board

Cheshire West Anchor Institutions Group

Institutes of Technology Network

ESFA

The various ways in which the College engages with stakeholders to plan, develop and deliver education training and support is set out in the College's Skills & Employer Strategy (2023-26).



Engagement with Other Providers in the Area

The College works collaboratively with other local providers and partners across the region most notably through formal and informal local networks. Collaborative working with Reaseheath College, Macclesfield College, Warrington & Vale Royal College, Priestley College and the University of Chester secured the Institute of Technology (IoT) for Cheshire & Warrington, with Cheshire College as the lead partner. A key to meeting the current and future higher technical skills needs of the region. Collaboration and planning between colleges has also secured significant investment via the Strategic Development Fund (SDF) to meet specific needs identified by employers. This continued collaboration between providers in the region has contributed to the development of the Accountability Statement.

The College allows local schools and Independent Training Providers (ITPs) to share resources and facilities at each campus and in some instances employers and ITPs are co-located on campuses to provide a co-ordinated offer.

Two weeks each year College Campuses are used to deliver Primary and Secondary College, in which the campuses are only used by year 6 and year 10 pupils working on projects with employer partners.

The Principal/CEO and Deputy Principal/Deputy CEO are members of regional boards ensuring close alignment of curriculum to local skills needs.



Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities

Table 1 below shows aims and target outcomes for 2023-24 in an Action Plan, that reflects how the College is responding to national, regional and/or local priorities and skills needs.

Aim/Action	Outcome/Impact
Ensure students on Study Programmes develop digital, business and employability skills so they can and do progress to employment, self-employment, and further learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce opportunities for learners to gain Microsoft Digital badges. Develop the tutorial programme so that learners recognise the value of their digital skills. Create opportunities within the study programme for learners to recognise and develop employability skills and, where relevant, business and entrepreneurship skills.
Ensure the Colleges' T Level, Higher Education HTQ and Apprenticeship offer provides opportunity for learners to develop technical skills aligned to national and regional key priority areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully align the whole College technical offer against the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) career routes. Target recruitment strategies to secure enrolments onto courses mapped against the identified key priorities career routes in Digital, Sustainable/Low Carbon/Life Sciences/Manufacturing/Health & Science Industries.

Aim/Action	Outcome/Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully utilise the Adult Education Budget, 'Multiply' and Skills Free Courses for Jobs so that Adults can progress from a point of low prior attainment to at least level three. Deliver Skills Bootcamps in Health Care and multiskilled Railtrack operatives
<p>Extend the range and reach of the curriculum offer relating to sustainability and carbon literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and introduce the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) / Association of Colleges (AoC) Carbon Literacy for FE course to the 16 - 19 study programme. Pro-actively promote an enhanced offer of Adult Education focused on sustainability. Promote the use of the sustainable house located at the Ellesmere Port Campus to engage employers in the development and delivery of innovative educational activities. Deliver Skills Bootcamps in Green Skills for example installation of electrical vehicle charging points and solar installation photovoltaic panels
<p>Exploit opportunities created by the development of the LSIP to develop an employer responsive curriculum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure skills and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) is embedded within the curriculum planning cycle. Review the Employer and partnership skills advisory boards ensuring they are reflective of local stakeholders and provide an opportunity for employers to influence and support curriculum development. Implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system with funds secured through the Strategic Development Fund.
<p>Support employers and local stakeholders to develop an understanding and awareness of the Cheshire and Warrington Institute of Technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key employers and develop meaningful interactions whereby employers derive benefits from these interactions leading to increased employer support for the College. Promote the benefits to employers of investing in their existing workforce by engaging with higher level study. Develop a Level 4+ curriculum offer that is accessible to employees and supports them to advance their career.
<p>Continue to provide an extensive range of Information, Advice and Guidance activities to ensure people get valuable information to help them make informed decisions about the subjects to study and the career pathway to follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop relationships with schools to ensure learners understand the options available to them when they leave school. Renewed focus on engaging learners with non-traditional areas of learning i.e., males into health and care, females into digital, engineering and construction. Develop an adult curriculum offer that promotes opportunities across the life sciences sector.

(Table 1: Contribution to National, Regional and Local Priorities)

On behalf of Corporation of Cheshire College South & West, it is hereby confirmed that the plan as set out above reflects an agreed statement of purpose, aims and objectives as approved by the corporation.



Dame Pat Bacon

Chair of Corporation

The plan will be published on the College's website within three months of the start of the new academic year.



Supporting Documents

[Strategic Priorities \(2022-25\)](#)

[Statutory Accounts \(2021-22\)](#)

[Ofsted Inspection \(2019\)](#)

[Cheshire & Warrington Skills Report \(2022\)](#)

[Cheshire & Warrington Adult Workforce & Skills Report \(2022\)](#)

[Digital Skills in Cheshire & Warrington Report \(2022\)](#)

[Cheshire & Warrington Economically Inactive & Unemployed](#)

[Skills & Employment Stakeholder Strategy \(2023-26\)](#)

[Estates Strategy \(2022-27\)](#)

[Marketing Strategy \(2022-25\)](#)



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